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FOR FEBRUARY 1931

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disques

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VOL. I

FEBRUARY, 1931

No. 12

WITH this issue the first volume of *Disques* becomes complete. A year of strenuous but pleasant effort. A year of some disappointments and many happy surprises. As we look back we realize that we have not succeeded in doing all that we set out to do. In another year, perhaps, more may be accomplished. We have, however, tried very hard to keep faith with our readers, and if we may accept the many kind expressions we have received at their face value, we may believe that we have done so. Our readers have not always agreed with our critics but not in one instance has the integrity of any of them been questioned.



Three things stand out in our minds which are sufficient reward for all the effort we have made. First, the generous and unqualified support of the three record manufacturers, without whose help nothing at all could have been accomplished. They have each one unselfishly done all in their power to further the interests of the record industry as a whole through the medium of *Disques*. Not once has any of them questioned the amount of space or the prominence given to the review of another's records, or have they ever questioned the criti-

cisms no matter how unfavorable they may have been to their own product. We have tried to be absolutely fair, giving praise where praise was due and condemnation when it was necessary. To have pursued this policy, without one bitter word from any of the manufacturers, assures us that not one particle of jealousy exists amongst them. Nothing could make us any happier. Nothing could strengthen our faith in the record industry more than the knowledge that three gigantic corporations are unselfishly promoting the industry's welfare in the interest of all.



The second is the interest that so many dealers have taken in *Disques*. From coast to coast the leading dealers have welcomed it. They have placed it on sale in their stores and have solicited subscriptions for it. Scores of dealers have introduced it to their customers. The approval of these outstanding merchants is certainly most welcome and encouraging.



The third, and the most gratifying of all, is the world-wide public acceptance of our little publication. Readers everywhere — Australia, Iceland, China, Japan, East Africa, South Africa, Turkey, Algeria, India, Europe, South America, Central America, various provinces of Canada, every

state in U. S. A.—all acclaim it. Nothing seems to give these enthusiastic readers more pleasure than to send us a subscription for one of their friends. A very large number of our subscriptions end with this issue. Just a little note from us has brought in hundreds of renewals. As this is written we are sure that over ninety percent of our readers will renew their subscriptions. That fact alone is sufficient encouragement for us to make every effort possible constantly to improve *Disques* each month.



With the continued support of the manufacturers, the ever increasing interest of the dealers, and the encouragement of our rapidly growing number of subscribers, scattered throughout the world, we look forward with enthusiasm to the task of preparing the second volume of *Disques*.



Every time the recording companies fail to issue on their monthly lists at least ten times as many records as the ordinary person could possibly afford to buy, there are always plenty of collectors who forthwith gloomily predict the immediate collapse of the record industry—if not tomorrow, then early next week at the latest. Not a month passes, indeed, that one or another of these insatiable individuals doesn't protest, loudly and belligerently, that the manufacturers, blandly ignoring their eloquent pleas, are overlooking all the really worth while musical compositions. The next time a collector of this type is discovered uttering such balderdash a copy of The Gramophone Shop's new 1931 edition of its *Encyclopedia of the World's Best Recorded Music* should be slipped into his hands. Only a casual glance through its 371 heavily laden pages will be sufficient to silence him with neatness and despatch.



The properly famous first edition of the *Encyclopedia* appeared nearly a year and a half ago. Since its publication, however, the companies have strengthened and increased their catalogues tremendously. At no period of similar length in the history of the gramophone, indeed, were so many good records released as have been made available since the publication of the first *Encyclopedia*. This later edition not only includes practically all the material contained in the first edition, but it also lists pretty nearly all the important releases that have since appeared. Records from almost all companies of all countries are listed under composers, or else in a special section in the rear, where albums of folk, church, popular and national music are included. There was a time, not so long ago, when any moderately enthusiastic collector could carry the names of all good records in his memory. That time, as this catalogue offers abundant evidence, is gone forever. It would be an extraordinary person indeed who could run through this *Encyclopedia* without discovering dozens of items the existence of which he had never suspected. The book is full of exciting discoveries and surprises.



The new edition is a model of convenience and accessibility; everything has been arranged so that information can be obtained in a few seconds without the necessity of consulting all sorts of bewildering indexes and tables of contents. The plan is simple and effective. Divided into four main sections, the *Encyclopedia* contains, first, a 232 page section listing the various composers—over 400 of them, incidentally!—together with their records; second, a 48 page section containing an *Alphabetical Index to Artists*, which includes invaluable references as to where their

records can be located; third, a section devoted to church music; and last, a special 67 page section, printed on blue paper, containing imported popular records, educational discs, historical records, folk and national music and albums of special interest. At the end there is an index to composers represented in the work.



The value of such a book can readily be imagined. It offers incontestable proof of the amazing scope and comprehensiveness of the modern record repertoire. Every collector, of course, has been dimly aware that the sum total of the world's recorded music must by now reach truly staggering proportions. Here is concrete evidence of it. The mere fact that anyone should deem it worth while to prepare and issue such a difficult work in itself constitutes an encouraging outlook for the record industry. Compiled by Richard Gilbert, whose reviews and articles frequently appear in *Disques*, the work is an admirable undertaking, intelligently prepared, well

(Continued on page 501)

INDEX, BINDING AND BOUND VOLUMES

A very comprehensive index to the first volume of *Disques*, printed on the same stock as the magazine, is in preparation. As only a limited number of these will be printed, our readers who desire one should send 50 cents in stamps to the publishers without delay.

Arrangements with John C. Haynes, bookbinder, 1110 Sansom Street, Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A., have been made for the binding of the first volume of *Disques* at very special prices. Bound in full green buckram, including index, \$2.25, or in one-half black morocco leather, including index, \$3.00. In either case the title *Disques* and the volume number will be stamped in gold upon the back. It will not be necessary for those who send their copies to be bound to purchase an index, as the bookbinder will have the indexes on hand, and one is included in the price for binding. All copies should be sent direct to the bookbinder, and remittance in full should be sent to him. The bound volume will be returned carriage prepaid.

A limited number of back copies of *Disques* has been reserved for binding. They will be bound with indexes and will be offered for sale at \$3.75 in full green buckram or at \$4.50 in one-half black morocco leather, carriage prepaid throughout the world. Orders for these should be forwarded direct to, and remittance made to the order of, the publishers, H. Royer Smith Company, 10th and Walnut Streets, Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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CODE

The first letters in the record number indicate the manufacturer and all records are domestic releases unless the word **IMPORTED** appears directly under the number: B-Brunswick, C-Columbia, EB-Edison-Bell, FO-Fonotipia, G-National Gramophonic Society, HO-Homocord, O-Odeon, PA-Parlophon, PD-Polydor, R-Regal (English), and V-Victor.

The Heavenly Twins of English Operetta

ISAAC GOLDBERG

I

It has often happened in the history of the right little, tight little isle that Merrie England has not been so Merrie. Storm Jameson, indeed, that alert critic of the modern drama, novelist of parts, and generally keen intelligence where modern ideas are concerned, has lately been deflating the jolly phrase and pointing out, with a merry twinkle of her own, the occasional falseness of the label. Merrie England, not to put too fine an edge upon it, has not always been a source of innocent merri-ment. Today we still laugh at the jibes and jollity of Gilbert and Sullivan, sometimes more than half a century after the ink dried on the Gilbertian pad and the Sullivanian score. We receive them as a remarkable combination of sparkle and decency. Not only are they classics in their own right, standing as a national institution next to Shakespeare; not only are they a jingling, melodious triumph over the mid-Victorianism out of which they emerged; they achieve a certain timelessness, which, with all the wear and tear of the calendar, is the mark of the classic, and they hold their own against a stage that lapses more often than not into the easy, if momentary, successes of salaciousness.

I am not trying, as more than one English commentator has done, to offer the acrimonious, atrabilious William Schwenck and the gentle Arthur Seymour as paragons of virtue,—a fraternal pair of Little Lords Fauntleroy in the theatre. I know that such a view is in the very traditions of the company established by Richard D'Oyly Carte, an excellent business man, in 1876. For this venture, Gilbert, in one of his latest librettos, would yet give us the fitting phrase: "How English and how pure!"

Indeed, there were doubts on the part of the early Gilbert and Sullivan public—among a certain not indistinguished section of that public—as to the purity of these operatic knights *sans peur et sans reproche*. Wrote one solemn owl, after D'Oyly Carte had brought the heavenly twins together for *The Sorcerer*: "From one so experienced as Mr. Gilbert, some amusing book ought to be expected. Cynical and sarcastic, of course, but with some reasonable grounds for those qualities of thought and expression. In 'The Sorcerer' such qualities exist, but it is doubtful whether they are fitted for association with music. The design of the conveying moral lessons by such means may, in the minds of some, be suitable for the purposes of comic opera. In our opinion it is not. Let vice be the subject of sarcasm, but let virtue, even though it be negative, remain unscathed by the corroding fluid of cynicism." Gilbert was also called to book for making "the earnest, hard-working, and serious clergy" the subject of "sneering caricature." (Do you remember the song of the pale young curate?)

There is, however, a more amusing recrimination on record. It comes from the pen of no lesser a dignitary than Lewis Carroll, author of the immortal *Alice in Wonderland*. Carroll, it should be recalled, had made an unsuccessful attempt to join forces with Sullivan in a musical setting of the fairy masterpiece. Also, it should be remembered, besides having been vigorously trained in mathematics, Carroll had been inducted into the rigors of theology and the ministry. It is not unreasonable to suppose that some such memories as these helped to dictate an article entitled "The Stage and the Spirit of Reverence," which he published in *The Theatre* on June 1, 1888.

In this little-known contribution, written ten years after the première of *Pinafore*, Carroll pays his disrespects to the Gilbert of that nautical extravaganza and of its ensorcelled predecessor.

"Mr. Gilbert," he chided, "seems to have a craze for making bishops and clergymen contemptible. Yet are they behind other professions in such things as earnestness, and hard work, and devotion of life to the call of duty? That clever song, 'The Pale Young Curate,' with its charming music, is to me simply painful. I seem to see him as he goes home at night, pale and worn with the day's work, perhaps sick with the pestilent atmosphere of a noisome garret where, at the risk of his life, he has been comforting a dying man—and is your sense of humor, my reader, so keen that you can *laugh* at that man? Then at least be consistent. Laugh also at that pale young doctor, whom you have summoned in such hot haste to your own dying child; ay, and laugh also at that pale young soldier, as he sinks on the trampled battlefield, and reddens the dust with his life-blood for the honor of Old England!"

As I have asked before: Was the creator of the undying Alice chiding Gilbert, or trying to . . . rival him? What was it that Dr. Johnson said of *The Beggar's Opera*? "There is in it such a labefactation of all principles as may be injurious to morality."

However, we have not yet done with the mathematician-theologian-humorist. Carroll had witnessed a children's performance of *Pinafore* and continued in the same humorless vein. One passage of the innocent piece "was to me sad beyond words. It occurs when the captain utters the oath 'Damn me! He said Damn me!' I cannot find words to convey to the reader the pain I felt in seeing these dear children taught to utter such words to amuse ears grown callous to their ghastly meaning. Put the two ideas side by side—Hell (no matter whether *you* believe in it or not; millions do) and those pure young lips thus sporting with its horrors—and then find what *fun* in it you can! How Mr. Gilbert could have stooped to write, or Sir Arthur Sullivan could have prostituted his noble art to set to music, such vile trash, it passes my skill to understand."

Surely, these must stand among the most humorless lines ever penned by a famous humorist. The finicky piety of Carroll is precisely the target at which Gilbert, in his verses, was aiming. Not that alone; it is the Church, as some wit has remarked, that made damnation classic. Would the word and the conception, otherwise, be alive in our vocabulary today?

If I resurrect these condemnations it is to show that Gilbert and Sullivan, today the models of clean fun, were not in their own day regarded with unruffled equanimity. Their merriment was not considered unqualifiedly innocent. (Nor, on Gilbert's part, was it; why should it have been?) There is, in much of the contemporary condemnation of jazz, this same moralistic spirit that sometimes masquerades as an æsthetic objection. Gaiety, somehow, is held by many in suspicion, despite the Frenchman's saying that we cannot be guilty when we are truly happy. Sullivan, from the beginning of his career as a writer of operetta (the dim days of *Thespis*) to the very end, had to listen to exponents of what I have called the Solemn Fallacy. These friends (perhaps it was they who finally betrayed him into the innocuousness of his grand opera, *Ivanhoe*) regarded his association with Gilbert as a betrayal of the tonal art. They would have had him grind out academic futilities,—cantatas, oratorios, symphonies, "grand" operas and the other stencils. Well, what remains of the academic and the lofty music that was written in England while Sullivan was "prostituting" his gifts on the lighter stage?

I am no seventh son of a seventh son . . . Certainly I have given too many years to the study of symphonic scores to scorn musical learning, of which the pedants and the academists have a great store. Yet what can be more sterile than learning for its own sake,—than cerebration unirrigated by the blood of life? I know well the Sullivan oratorios and his solitary symphony. I would not take them if I could have them all at the cost of a single scene from any of the better operettas. I would not exchange *Pinafore*, *The Mikado*, *Princess Ida*, *Patience*, *The Gondoliers*, *Iolanthe*, *Trial by Jury*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Ruddigore*—any one of them—for all the academic symphonies and overtures and oratorios turned out since Sullivan was born . . . And, to get back to my denial of the possession of prophetic gifts, I am inclined to believe that an evaluation of American music, some fifty years after the birth-year of George Gershwin (1898) will reveal a similar triumph of vitality over correctness.

II

These things being so, it is doubly fortunate—not to say healthily symptomatic—that we are fast receiving a complete set of the Gilbert-Sullivan operettas recorded electrically under the supervision of Rupert D'Oyly Carte. Rupert has carried on, intelligently and not with humorless literalism, the traditions of his father, Richard, who, after having brought Gilbert and Sullivan together for *Trial by Jury*, made up his mind to keep them together.

The importance of these recordings is not due alone to the pleasure that they give,—a rich pleasure, oft-renewed, and representing some of the finest gramophonic reproductions that have come out of any country since the electrical process has been perfected . . . It is well known that the lover of Gilbert and Sullivan is just a trifle unreasonable in his affections. This is eminently proper. All affection is, and should be, above the sterile rationality—sterile so far as the emotions of friendship and fondness go—of logic. An irate Englishman, in a book devoted ostensibly to psychology, once tried to show that there was a Gilbert-and-Sullivan-neurosis. Sweet ailment! What he really proved, I believe, was that there was an *anti-G. & S.* neurosis on the part of certain psychologists.

In addition, then, to the inexhaustible pleasure of the Gilbert and Sullivan albums, is their status as authentic versions of musical classics. Consider the great number of performances, amateur and professional, that take place in this country within a year's time. Instead of the old method of rehearsals, here at hand is a performance, in the unbroken line of the Savoy tradition, to which the entire cast of the company, and the conductor himself, may listen as frequently as desired. The individual singers may study their rôles at home, by themselves, and hear them in conjunction with the surrounding music. The chorus, in much the same way, has the Savoy pattern after which to model itself. The conductor listens to the qualities of pace and performance, of interpretation, and is guided by a masterly hand. The D'Oyly Carte recordings, I venture to say, are one of the greatest boons ever handed on to the amateur singers and producers of the United States, and all other countries where English is spoken or sung.

I am not a believer in the sacredness of tradition. I do not mean to imply, then, that amateur or professional productions should follow, without question, the cues engraved in these discs. There is room for difference of interpretation, subtle or obvious. I am sure, too, that some of our fellow-enthusiasts across the Atlantic are too ready—with that certain well-known condescension toward foreigners—to look down upon American productions of the operettas. Not that even the best of our productions have always been altogether free of blemish, major or minor. Without letting patriotism corrupt artistic integrity—there should be no room for patriotism in the

arts—I find it possible to believe that England may have a little to learn even from American producers and performers of Gilbert and Sullivan. The attainment of excellence implies not only a complex reciprocity of influences, but a willingness to learn at whatever source.

My favorites among the electrical recordings—I cannot imagine a Gilbert and Sullivan “fan” not wishing to own every recorded operetta—are the rollicking rendition of *Trial by Jury*, the buccaneering jollity of *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Iolanthe*—the greatest of the series, in my opinion, and representing each collaborator at his characteristic best, as well as both collaborators in their happiest blending—and now, as the latest release, the imperishable *H. M. S. Pinafore*, which, believe it or not, threatened in its earliest days to be wrecked on the reef of public indifference and uncertain appreciation.

The recent improvement in our own operetta is not entirely unrelated to the scores of Sullivan and the librettos of Gilbert. It is the spirit of these men, and not necessarily their personal methods, that should be absorbed. Sullivan had the gift of satirizing music *in music*, while Gilbert added spice with his rhymes and metres. George Kaufman, Morrie Riskind, and the Gershwin brothers, in *Strike Up The Band!* suggested what could be done by American verve and pep toward acclimatizing in this too-sensitive nation the process of musical satire. The declaration of war against Switzerland, the conduct of that war, its genesis in chocolate products manufactured with second-grade milk, the mock heroics of the soldiery, and especially the rhymes of Ira and the music of George, made *Strike Up The Band!* a landmark in our recent light opera. I for one do not doubt that if Sullivan were alive today he would be deftly adapting jazz, among other things, to the metrical insinuations of his irrepressible partner.

To return to the Gilbert and Sullivan albums: I consider the series of the Savoy operettas, as issued by His Master's Voice in England and by the Victor Company in the United States, one of the summits of electrical recording; one of the finest educational enterprises yet undertaken by a phonograph organization; and, above all, for its quality of singing and playing, one of the most enduring assurances of excellent entertainment that has come from the studios. I can only hope that even *Utopia, Limited* and *The Grand Duke* will not be overlooked . . . And that, even though the book is not by Gilbert, we shall have that delightful one-acter of Burnand and Sullivan, *Cox and Box*.

THE RECORDS

The Gondoliers. Comic Opera in Two Acts. Rendered by Rupert D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Twelve 12-inch discs (V-D1334 to V-D1345) in album. \$24.

Trial By Jury. Dramatic Cantata in One Act. Rendered by Rupert D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Four 12-inch discs (V-9314 to V-9317) in album. Victor Set C-4. \$6.50.

H.M.S. Pinafore. Comic Opera in Two Acts. Rendered by D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Nine 12-inch discs (V-D1844 to V-D1852) in album. \$18.

Pirates of Penzance. Comic Opera in Two Acts. Rendered by D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Eleven 12-inch discs (V-9607 to V-9617) in album. Victor Set C-6. \$16.50.

Iolanthe. Comic Opera in Two Acts. Rendered by D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Eleven 12-inch discs (V-9708 to V-9718) in album. Victor Set C-10. \$16.50.

Yeomen of the Guard. Comic Opera in Two Acts. Rendered by D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Eleven 12-inch discs (V-D1549 to V-D1559) in album. \$22.

The Mikado. Comic Opera in Two Acts. Rendered by D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Eleven 12-inch discs (V-35860 to V-35870) in album. \$13.75.

The Bayreuth Festival "Tannhäuser"*

RICHARD J. MAGRUDER

The first introduction to Wagner's music—that of his artistic maturity, of course—is generally a pretty disastrous experience. When, somewhat dubious and wholly unsuspecting, you first become acquainted with one of the later music dramas, the work of all other composers is quite likely to seem, by comparison, somehow dull, futile and irrelevant. This is, of course, a fault—if, in fact, it can plausibly be called a fault—that Wagner shares in common with all genuinely first-rate composers, with, indeed, all genuinely first-rate artists, whether their medium be music, poetry, drama, painting or literature. But in Wagner's case, because of the peculiar nature of his music, this fault, or whatever you wish to call it (perhaps virtue), seems more definitely pronounced. It is true of other first-rate artists, but to a strikingly less degree. They are not so completely and devastatingly absorbing as Wagner is when he obtains a proper hold upon you. His music appears at first so overwhelmingly satisfying and so emotionally exhausting that all else seems, for a time (the duration of which is commonly determined by the individual's intelligence and breadth of mind and heart), quite trivial and pointless.



Havelock Ellis, in his *Studies in the Psychology of Sex*, has demonstrated that the effects of a Wagnerian music drama upon a receptive listener are essentially similar to those of the early erotic festivals upon the impious savages who, unfamiliar with the hard and fast rules conveniently laid down by the better-thought-of moralists of our groaning civilization, unblushingly set certain periods in the year aside as a time when pretty nearly everything could be done with the full consent and even approval of the authorities.

Richard Specht, the product of a later and more delicate civilization, has given a frank description of what happened to him after first hearing Wagner. "I well remember a night in March," he says in his *Johannes Brahms*, "when a performance of *Siegfried* for the first time opened up this world for me. I walked about for hours, sobbing, raving, entranced, and filled with furious resentment against those who had so far cheated me of all this."

This too-binding and unbalanced passion for Wagner's music, of course, later loses its original force in most fairly intelligent music lovers, subsequently resulting in a more wary and sensible approach and therefore in a more reasoned, balanced and rewarding appreciation. There are, it is true, some who never quite recover from the first stunning impact, and they continue through life with a more or less maimed musical sensibility, oblivious to all but Wagner. With the increasing facilities for spreading good music, people of this sort tend to become less numerous, as is attested by the fact that the once common Wagnerian fanatic is seldom encountered these days. He has been replaced by a more discriminating music lover, who

* *Tannhäuser*. Opera in Three Acts. (Richard Wagner.) Thirty-six sides. Rendered by Bayreuth Festival Company of 1930, including: Sigmund Pilinszky (Tenor), Ivar Andresen (Bass), Herbert Janssen (Baritone), George von Tschurtschenthaler (Baritone), Maria Müller (Soprano), Erna Berger (Soprano), Ruth Jost-Arden (Soprano), Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Karl Elmendorff. Eighteen 12-inch discs (C-LX81 to C-LX98) in two albums. \$36. *Miniature Score*: Eulenburg No. 903.

is capable of enjoying the best in nearly all good composers—at least in a wide variety of good composers.

With Wagner's earlier operas, of course, no such disaster is likely to occur. *Rienzi*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin* and *Tannhäuser*, despite their many substantial merits, especially those discernible in the last three, have too many glaring faults, too many palpable absurdities, to cause unqualified admiration. *Tannhäuser*, with its Overture and Venusberg music, rewritten (and with such felicitous results!) during the *Tristan* period, begins dangerously enough, but before long—shortly after *Tannhäuser* manages to escape Venus' capable arms—we are back on fairly safe ground; we are back with the early Wagner, laboriously making his way, now and then achieving incomparable effects, but equally as often spoiling them by over-emphasis, over-statement and a too diligent attempt to impress.

Thus far, with the exception of an abridged version of *Lohengrin* and an abundance of excerpts, we haven't been given the opportunity of hearing extended recordings of any of Wagner's works save the admittedly greater ones: *Tristan*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* and *Parsifal*. Now with the release of the latest Bayreuth Festival albums, containing an almost complete recording of *Tannhäuser*, we can not only hear the earlier Wagner in a manner that does him ample justice, but we can hear him frequently enough to form a pretty good opinion of his early musical efforts.

The first thing most people will notice about this Bayreuth Festival *Tannhäuser* is that Arturo Toscanini doesn't conduct it. Since his performances of this opera were said to have been the salient features of last Summer's Festival, there is bound to be a good deal of disappointment. If Toscanini were only half as good as his admirers make him out to be, a complete recording of *Tannhäuser*, done under his hand with the Bayreuth orchestra, chorus and artists, would be a priceless document indeed, not only for us but for future generations as well. Those, however, who find the music itself just as interesting as the conductor, and frequently a great deal more so, will recover from this very natural disappointment with alacrity when they hear these records.

For there can be no question but that they represent the very finest work that we have as yet had from Bayreuth. The first Festival album was a magnificent group of excerpts; but the *Tristan* set which followed the next year was disappointing in many ways. The *Tannhäuser* records, however, seem fairly impenetrable to critical darts: in both recording and interpretation they rise to almost unbelievable heights of excellence.

There is no space here to go into a detailed account of the opera, its plot and its complicated motives. This information can readily be obtained elsewhere, perhaps best in Ernest Newman's admirable book on Wagner's music dramas and operas in his *Stories of the Great Operas* series (Alfred Knopf, 1928).

During Wagner's disastrous visit to Paris (1839 to 1842), he came upon a poem on the subject of *Tannhäuser* by Tieck. Tieck's treatment of the subject seemed to Wagner altogether too cloying and sweetly scented, but the legend made a profound impression upon him. A story by E. T. A. Hoffmann deepened this impression, so that when he left Paris for Dresden his mind was thoroughly inflamed with the subject. Passing through the Thuringian valley, from which the hill of the Wartburg is visible, his fancy was struck by one of the ridges in the hill, and this he named the Hørselberg, which in the legend is the scene of the somewhat bawdy activities of Venus and Tannhäuser. Wagner often passed through this valley in

later life, and it seemed, so he tells us, to be "so peculiarly connected with my departures from Germany or my return to it."

The libretto was finished in May, 1843, at Dresden. The music was written between 1843 and 1844; the instrumentation was completed the following year. The original title of the opera was *Der Venusberg*, but this, being made the object of indecorous merriment on the part of irreverent medical students, was dropped and the more seemly title of *Tannhäuser und der Sängerkrieg auf Wartburg* adopted. *Tannhäuser* was first given October 19, 1845, at Dresden, with Wagner himself conducting. The first performance, because of inadequate preparation, was unfavorably received. The weak points of the first production were remedied for the second, but only a small audience was on hand to note the improvements. The third, however, was an immense success, and the subsequent history of the opera, including the unfortunate production at Paris in 1861, is well known.

The cast for the present performance is distributed as follows: Tannhäuser, Sigmund Pilinszky (tenor); the Landgrave, Ivar Andresen (bass); Wolfram, Herbert Janssen (baritone); Biterolf, George von Tschurtschenthaler (baritone); Elisabeth, Maria Müller (soprano); the shepherd boy, Erna Berger (soprano); Venus, Ruth Jost-Arden (soprano). The Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus, of course, are on hand, and the proceedings are directed by Karl Elmendorff, who conducted the Bayreuth *Tristan* set.

As the review copies of the work arrived at the last moment, these comments are based on a single hearing of the discs, and so necessarily many beauties, and possibly some flaws, passed unnoticed. Of the latter, however, it can safely be said that there are no serious ones. The work is more nearly complete than any other extended Wagnerian recording now available, only some seventy of the 383 pages of the Schirmer piano-vocal score being omitted. It is impossible to do more here than briefly indicate a few of the salient moments of the recording. These are contributed by Pilinszky, Maria Müller, Ivar Andresen, Herbert Janssen, the chorus and the orchestra. Their work is unfailingly fine.

The first act is given without cuts. The Overture and the Venusberg music are beautifully done, and the recording permits the music to come through superbly. Elmendorff's reading lacks the fire and drama that Stokowski imparts to this music, but his conception is nonetheless a sound one, and it serves as an admirable introduction to what follows. Sigmund Pilinszky's performances last Summer were said to have been spoiled by a cold which he inconveniently caught just before the Festival was to begin. These discs apparently were made either before or after his cold, for his voice throughout the work is splendidly clear, rich and full. The Venus, Ruth Jost-Arden, is adequate but not outstanding. Her enunciation is not so clear as it might be. But she makes a tolerably seductive Venus, and the chorus of sirens who aid and abet her in her lamentable transactions are thoroughly satisfactory. Such things as Tannhäuser's song in praise of love, with the harp accompaniment; the shepherd's attractive song and the English horn solo; the song of the elder Pilgrims as they come down the mountain path from the Wartburg; the hunting horns—these have been caught vividly by the recording. The distant chiming of bells as the Pilgrims' hymn dies away is lacking for some reason or other.

The first cut occurs in the second act. The duet between Tannhäuser and Elisabeth stops at page 117 of the Schirmer score, and the ensuing scene between Elisabeth and the Landgrave is omitted. The cut extends to page 127, where the Processional March begins. This march is one of the most stirring parts of the

recording. The Landgrave's address which follows the march is omitted, and the music begins again with Wolfram's *Blick 'ich umber*. The chorus in approval of this song is lacking (pp. 152 to 158). Tannhäuser's tactless song in praise of desire follows, but at its conclusion there is another cut, a rather lengthy one, from page 163 to 189. The music resumes with Elisabeth's *Zurück von ihm!*

Unfortunately, the Prelude to Act 3* is omitted, the act beginning instead with Wolfram's *Wohl wusst 'ich hier*. A little further on Wolfram's lines *Elisabeth, dürft 'ich dich nicht geleiten* are cut, and the next part the records offer is Wolfram's *Star of Eve* song. Tannhäuser's entrance is missing (pp. 298 to 304). Beginning with his *Inbrunst im Herzen*, the music continues uncut to the conclusion of the opera.

The purely mechanical parts of this set, as has been mentioned before, are superbly managed. The Bayreuth Orchestra is recorded with incredible fidelity, and the individual instruments come out with their proper value. The chorus is large and impeccably trained, and its work is distinguished by precision, beauty of tone and conviction. In those moments when the orchestra, chorus and principals all contribute to the music there is no faltering on the part of the recording; throughout the entire thirty-six sides it reveals no noticeable flaws; throughout it is thrillingly realistic. Better balance between a large orchestra and chorus could hardly be obtained on records.

Of the cast, Pilinszky, Janssen and Maria Müller unquestionably do the finest work, though Andresen, in his few appearances, is admirable. Janssen's Wolfram is conveyed convincingly, and he renders the rôle with sound sense. His voice is excellent. The whole performance, indeed, is stamped with the authority, sincerity and competence that are said to distinguish Bayreuth performances, so that it takes no special eloquence to establish the fact that this release is an altogether significant one. Wagnerian collectors, hearing these discs, will feel a pang of regret that other and more important Wagnerian recordings, like *Tristan*, *Die Walküre* and *Götterdämmerung*, don't enjoy similar mechanical and artistic excellence. But *Tannhäuser* still contains many marvels for the music lover to ponder over, and it will require some months before those contained in this glorious recording will be exhausted. All of which can be boiled down to the simple statement that the Bayreuth *Tannhäuser* is a notable achievement for all concerned.

(Continued from page 493)

printed and attractively bound. No record collector — no music lover, for that matter,—it is trite but important to say, can afford to be without it.



MARGARET MALPASS GEISZEL, who contributes this issue's frontispiece, based on the Boston Symphony Orchestra's records of Ravel's *Ma Mère l'Oye*, is an illustrator of children's books, and has been engaged at various times in designing costumes for both the stage and cinema. Her husband, John H. Geizel, who contributes the decoration for the review of the Bayreuth *Tannhäuser* discs in this issue, is also an illustrator, and his work has appeared in many magazines. Mr. Geizel recently returned from California, where he devoted his time to designing costumes for several important moving picture productions.

* This rather important part of the opera has been recorded by a symphony orchestra conducted by Albert Coates on V-9028; it can readily be slipped in at this point of the work.

Sentimentality and Music

LAURENCE POWELL

The man-in-the-street considers *The Rosary* one of the crowning glories of the art of music, while the initiated musician damns it as execrable bosh: the man-in-the-street regards *Parsifal* as the most tedious long-winded bore ever devised by the brain of man, while the musician places it among the crowning glories of his art. Not the least of the differentiating factors is sentimentality, present to an extreme degree in *The Rosary* and almost totally absent from *Parsifal*. The culturally weak get their emotional thrills from a sentimentality that nauseates the strong, and the strong get their emotional food from an art a criterion of whose excellence is absence of sentimentality. Any supposition that sentimentality is a weakening factor in art is rendered a positive fact when one realizes that sentimentality is conspicuous by its absence from all great works of art from antiquity down. However, it must be conceded that much music, still on the pedestal of high esteem, is quite sentimental. Many of Beethoven's slow movements, half of Chopin's output and all Mendelssohn's religious music exhibit much of the *febile nescioquid* that must be called sentimentality. This music is too young for time to have done its final sifting on it; nevertheless it becomes daily more obvious that most of this music is being relegated to the most inaccessible shelves of the musician's library. Weber's maudlin piano music has even been banished to the farthest reaches of the attic, and most of Liszt's enormous output has made excellent kindling, not for the spirit though. But in spite of many Homeric nods, Beethoven, Chopin and Mendelssohn wrote music than which there is none greater, their masterpieces being free from sentimentality, except perhaps the *Eroica*, whose funeral march is rather a bilious dish to many of us.

The popular music of our time has made a goddess of sentimentality, and the most notorious attempt at making jazz respectable flaunted the word "blue" in its title. Whatever cleverness there is in the *Rhapsody in Blue* is spoilt by the presence of sentimentality. All efforts to lengthen the skirt of jazz and to evangelize her are futile from the start for the simple reason that jazz is the daughter of the Maudlin Goddess. No permanent art can be made of a substance that has been proved to be an enemy of durability. What distinguishes Constant Lambert's *Rio Grande* from Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is the lesser degree of sentimentality in the former. Modern composers of more serious calibre, however, exhibit quite opposite tendencies to their popular colleagues. Realizing that the Maudlin Goddess is the enemy of durability, they have fled her as the plague and would far rather be unintelligible than mawkish. In their mad scamper they have overlooked sentimentality's better half, romance. In fear of the flood they have lost sight of the fact that water in common-sense quantities is necessary to life; in crowding out romanticism they have divested their music of the necessary vitalizing force; they have turned their backs on the spiritual element, and their boast is that they are "classical." Bach did not go around saying: "I'm a classical composer," and as a matter of fact he was not; otherwise he could never have composed the *Matthew Passion*, a great romantic music drama. The words "classical" and "romantic" have lost their true significance; the professors have narrowed down the former to mean only the eighteenth century schools and the latter to apply to the nineteenth century hyper-emotionalism. Since I want to use these words in their broadest generic sense, I propose dipping into Blake's symbolism; I shall use the word "losian" to designate romantic emotionalism, and "urizenic" when I refer to music that has come solely from the head. Los is the Spirit of Poetic Imagination, the word being an anagram of sol, light. Urizen is Cold Calculation, the name being

phonetically formed from "your reason." In Blake's philosophy Los is good, while Urizen is evil. There is a due seasoning of losianism in the chemistry of all great art, from the *Iliad* and the Parthenon down to the *Forsyte Saga* and *Le Sacre du Printemps*. The very urge to creative activity is a gift of Los. The music of the Los-hating moderns is weak from the start, and the Babel of neo-classicism is doomed because it is built with the dry and crumbling sand of urizenicism; it stands no better chance of permanence than the tower of symphonic jazz, whose foundations are planted in the soft clay of sentimentality.

The modern German schools, championed by Schönberg, have created a bastard form of mathematics; their god is Urizen, but the people, as we have seen, worship the Maudlin Goddess and the better among them are devotees of Los. Even the robot loves Los! and in spite of Spengler's great indictment, Western mechanical device is coming to the spiritual aid of man. In Germany the radio and talking-film have jibbed at Urizen's bullying and have given rise to the new school of *Gebrauchsmusik* or use-music, because, whether Schönberg likes it or not, his music is certainly not useful. Imagine the consternation of George V. if the choir and august organist of Westminster Abbey struck up a specially commissioned anthem from the pen of Schönberg—imagine the terror it would strike into the royal grandchild in its baptismal uneasiness and try, if you can, to picture Handel turning, no, whirling in his Poet's Corner grave! The radio and the talking-film are vastly more important to the development of the art of music than are the urizenic laboratory experiments of the "neo-classicists," and they are vastly more useful, if only because they are acting as stabilizers. Whether *Gebrauchsmusik* will remain in the arms of Los or go to the extreme of becoming a denizen of the temple of the Maudlin Goddess is a matter for speculation. At present it is an honorable pursuit to write *Gebrauchsmusik*: Krenek has already showed signs of capitulating, and Hindemith will soon leave the camp of Urizen.

In America, too, has machinery come to the aid of music, but in an opposite direction: the robot in this country stands aghast at the overweening sentimentality of so many thousands of America's music lovers. However, neither the radio nor the talking-film can claim any attention as stabilizers; both are outside any discussion of art, the radio being for the most part in the clutches of the advertiser and the film, as far as music is concerned, inexorably keeps the home-tears flowing. It is the phonograph to which we must look for stabilization: though it will give rise to no new school of American music, it is doing a far simpler thing and a very much better thing. It is introducing, for the first time, into the home and the school, the masterpieces of music. Victor Herbert, high-priest of the Maudlin Goddess, will not be the hero he has been, and *The Rosary* will be robbed of its tear-provoking efficacy. The descendants of Daniel Boone, Kit Carson and Co., when the phonograph dins into their ears the *Ride of the Valkyries*, will have no further excuse to consider music as a foible for sissies; and university professors will perhaps cease regarding their colleagues of the music department as love-lorn loons who spend their worthless lives inculcating the wishy-washy principles of a parlor accomplishment into the heads of their flapper students. We shall no longer hear the school mistress telling us that "classical" music is not for children: and perhaps, eventually, we shall be spared from hearing hundreds of healthy youngsters drawing out yards of worthless tripe at high school contests, under the impression that it is music; perhaps also we shall be spared the sight and sound of a band of husky lads being educated to coerce from their cornets the piffle offered them by 90% of the publishing houses. The never-ending lists of "teaching-pieces," born of commerce, will be truncated, and more than one American publishing-editor will be

able, at last, to assuage his conscience by allowing idealistic educational interests a place in the scheme of his house. At present the music publishers of the richest country in the world fail to issue more than a half dozen worth while things in a year, while the houses of a poverty-stricken land like Austria flourish catalogues that whet the appetite of the most exacting connoisseur. The music teachers of Austria, we can only suppose, do not flirt with the Maudlin Goddess. The ancients, pedagogues and professors in America would do well to realize that hanging over all their efforts is an emasculating disease, and until they put their heads together to the flouting of the Maudlin Goddess, who drops upon their commendable zeal the germs of sentimentality, they are absolutely wasting their time and thoroughly deserving the indictment of their faculty colleagues in science.

Can one blame the man-in-the-street for his love of *The Rosary* when he hears nothing but sentimental music in church? He considers the music he hears in church as being as sacred as the Bible, and thus sentimentality becomes almost a sacred element, which he will read into any piece of music, whether it is inherently present or not. The preacher is to blame for this attitude. In subjecting the Bible to mawkish commentary in his sententious preaching, he has been quick to realize that the choir and organist are powerful allies in the production of sob-stuff. In his distorted view of religion, emotionalism plays an all-important rôle; he even goes so far as to regard the Maudlin Goddess as his chief aid in popularizing religion, and thus church music has now become a tool for the converting of his flock to floods of repentant tears instead of the means of giving honor and glory to God that it was in the minds of Palestrina and Bach.

The sentimental attitude undermines any true perception of musical values right from the start, even in a Beethoven or a Schubert devotee. If it was suddenly discovered that the four knocks of the *Fifth Symphony* were not Fate at all, but simply Beethoven putting down his beer-mug, the *Fifth Symphony* would rapidly lose adherents, and musical appreciationists would soon go out of business. The sentimentalist likes to picture poor, dear Schubert, wan and pale, disappointed in love and life, dying in the middle of the composition of the *Unfinished*. Broadcast it in the name of truth that Schubert wrote that symphony six years before his death during his first attack of venereal disease, and you probably blow the bottom out of the symphony—it loses its flavor and the unchangeable notes are changed for the sentimentalist, thus showing what distortion results from a sentimental attitude. Music history, and biography in particular have been great sufferers from this attitude, and it is only recently that anything like a scientific musicology has emerged. Beethoven was pictured as a melodramatic lunatic; Haydn as nothing but a dear old gentleman full of funny jokes; and, not knowing any better, many folk accepted the operetta *Blossom Time* as the real history and portrayal of Schubert. Second-rate musicians tried to live up to this mythology, and thus we get long hair, flowing ties, the cultivation of a distraught mien and a desire to be as impractical and absent-minded as possible. All this may be one cause of the modernists' flight from Los, for aside from their music, they try to look like bank managers. If Stravinsky cashed my check at the bank I should see nothing out of place, but if the popular conception of Beethoven leered at me from behind the bars, I should certainly not hand him my check.

Another excrescence of the sentimental attitude is the worship of the "star," again a distorting factor because it pays all attention to the messenger boy, while allowing the telegram to flutter to the floor unopened. Most so-called artists live on kudos, and so must take every precaution to feed the source of it: no need to play big stuff; it goes unnoticed if you do—just tickle the ears of the worshippers and all

will be well. This is why John McCormack sings *Mother Machree*, a high-power gold-digger, so many million times, while it is well known that his grand passion is Hugo Wolf, and Kreisler plays pretty little soupçons instead of the Elgar *Violin Concerto*, which was written for him. In London, McCormack sings Wolf, and in Germany, Kreisler behaves himself better. Publishers, of course, have to help the star, and so give pretty titles to Beethoven sonatas so that the stars can occasionally play bigger stuff and get away with it. *The Moonlight* stands a better chance of making the eyes water than would Opus 27, No. 2. Opus 111 would leap into immediate fame if some publisher had the brain wave to call it *The Battle of Chateau Thierry*.

Can one blame Schönberg for escaping from all this, even if he has gone to extremes? There never has been such divergence between popular music and serious music as at present,—an unbalanced condition in which there can be no health. But the future looks rosy: Los has seized the engines of the robot and is already achieving stabilization,—in Germany by a humanization of the mathematical trend, and in this country by extirpation of the prevalent anæmia. The phonograph is not the least cause of the new healthy interest in Brahms, whose present vogue substantiates the sanity of Huneke's dictum: "Brahms is the music of the future." The music of Brahms, among all composers, is a perfect fusion of both Iosianism and urizenicism, of heart and head, as indeed all true culture must be. And if American culture has a sentimental heart, need we worry? The Maudlin Goddess has fostered many a splendid statesman and saint, many a Lincoln and many a Francis, but was it not Urizen who sacked Rome, blasted the Parthenon and violated Belgium?

New York Letter

NEW YORK, January, 1931.

The League of Composers, that intrepid and progressive organization to whom we offer thanks for so many introductions to music of today—including among other things the greater part of Schönberg's music performed in America, première ballet and stage presentations here of *Les Noces*, *L'Histoire du Soldat*, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, *El Retablo de Maese Pedro* (Falla), and *Die Glückliche Hand*—began its eighth season on December 10, 1930, at Town Hall. Announcements have already been made of the society's plans for presenting this Spring, with Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra, Strawinsky's *Oedipus Rex* and Prokofieff's ballet *Pas d'Acier*. The editorial offices of *Modern Music*, the League's publication, also announce a special Spring number of the quarterly devoted entirely to mechanical and recorded music.

The first concert of the 1930-31 season was significant on the whole, and succeeded with excellent presentations of works by Marion Bauer, Arnold Bax, Paul Hindemith, Heinrich Kaminski, Darius Milhaud, Felix Petyrek, Carlos Salzedo, Lazare Saminsky, and Roger Sessions. The last named composer's representation came first with the playing of a *Chorale Prelude* for organ, a work distinguished by breadth and earnestness of expression, brilliantly executed by Gottfried Federlein. Contrapuntal development with a rare treatment of dissonant and clashing parts serves to modernize a work which, naturally, has a decided archaistic cast and a scholastic leaning. Not all of Sessions works point thus—back to Bach. His symphony, first played by the Boston Symphony Orchestra (which event did much to determine his status as a highly important native composer) and included as an

American representation at the Zurich Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music, is "music for every day," as Paul Rosenfeld remarks, "in the spirit of *Renard* and *L'Histoire du Soldat*." It is a pity that domestic recording companies will not issue in permanent form at least one of the works by this uncompromising and greatly talented, altogether American musician. Roger Sessions' music is of today and of America, despite, if one may add, his emphatic eclecticism and Strawinskian tendencies.

Quite in contrast was the next offering: a *Third Symphony*, for violin, viola, 'cello, basso, flute, clarinet and bassoon, by Milhaud. In three movements, each lasting a few minutes, the work is early *Groupe des Six* writing: polytonal, naïve as to form, and embodying the sometimes rare characteristics of youthful jubilation and impetuous truculence.

Paul Hindemith's choral songs, *O Herr, geb jeden Mann sein eignen Tod* and *Laudsknechts Trinklied*, together with Petyrek's *Allelujah* from his *Litany* and Kaminski's *Prelude and Fugue for Violin and Organ* made the high lights of the program. Hindemith's music, unfortunately, has not been abundantly played on this side of the water, and recordings remain confined to the quartet, Op. 22, and the string trio fragment—both issued by Polydor several years ago. These expressive *a capella* choruses show—in the freedom of their vocal lines, the use of polytonal harmony, and the unusual effects of sonority—successful vocal writing in the manner usually associated with this young German's more familiar instrumental creation.

Two other first performances in America were the Kaminski work, played by Paul Stassevitch and Gottfried Federlein, and the *Allelujah* of Petyrek. Neither of these composers is well known here. The former, according to the program notes, was born in the Black Forest in 1886, studied in Heidelberg and Berlin, and since 1914 has lived at Ried in Oberbayern. His compositions include works for organ, chamber music, songs, a *Concerto Grosso* for double orchestra, choral compositions and an outstanding opera, *Yürg Yenatch*, given in Dresden two years ago. The *Prelude and Fugue* is a magnificent piece and was given a splendid reading by two entirely capable artists. The work is stamped with a fine lyric quality, a more than commendable knowledge of counterpoint—a kind of Mozartean polyphony rather than like that of Bach. It brought down considerable applause from the house, the usual sophisticated League of Composers audience. The *Litany* by one of the leading Austrian composers (Petyrek was born in 1892) provoked much attention, so it is said, when performed at the Donaueschingen and Salzburg Festivals. It is, in fact, a very remarkable example of modern choral writing. In the *Allelujah* the chorus is divided into several quartets and solo groups which sing against a background of the main chorus. The *Allelujah* motive is sung as an *ostinato* by a female quartet against this rich background. The Emanu-El Choir, with two vocal quartets, displayed fine command of the intricate writing and rendered a highly commendable performance under the direction of Lazare Saminsky.

Saminsky was quite in the spotlight throughout the evening. Aside from conducting the Milhaud, Hindemith, Bax, Bauer and Petyrek works, he directed the first performance in America of a chamber orchestra version of excerpts from his cantata-pantomime *The Daughter of Jephtha*. The odd instrumentation, involving wind instruments, two pianos and percussion, including a wind machine and a metallic shaker filled with buckshot in lieu of a tambourin, failed to disguise the *Judith* and *Le Roi David* influence. The Emanu-El Choir, Ruth Rodgers and the Pan-American Ensemble assisted with the chamber orchestra in the presentation.

Marion Bauer supplied a *Tryste Noël*, Op. 22, No. 1, and a *capella* carol for women's voices. The Bax work, a *Carol for Men's Voices* (fifteenth century), accompanied by piano and flute, was typical of this important Englishman's style and proclaimed the approaching Yuletide with a proper "Make me merry both more and less for now is the time of Christymas."

The *Concerto for Harp and Seven Wind Instruments* by that distinguished master of the stringed instrument, Carlos Salzedo, closed the concert. Mr. Salzedo conducted and Lucile Lawrence, to whom the work is dedicated, performed the difficult solo part with her customary impeccable technique.

Those of you who have acquired and enjoyed the recorded harp concerto of Mlle. Henriette Renie (O-171.076 and O-171.077) will doubtless be interested in this amazing work by Carlos Salzedo. There is nothing quite like it in contemporary harp literature. The resources of the harp, as expounded by Mr. Salzedo and Miss Lawrence (*Method for the Harp*; New York: G. Schirmer, Inc.), are absolutely unprecedented. They have developed a new technique, almost limitless in its scope of varying means of expression, of color, nuance, timbre and range of chiaroscuro.

I am told that the Renie harp records, imported from French Odeon, have enjoyed a moderate success across the various dealers' counters. And, this being true, I cannot see the reason for keeping the playing of Carlos Salzedo or his wife, Miss Lawrence, off American discs. The *Harp Concerto* would give a colorful spot to any domestic catalogue and recorded would become an excellent assisting factor in the study of a large number of harp students. The work is in three movements, but it does not adhere strictly to traditional form. Rather, each movement contains a series of rhythmically diverse dances. The instrumentation is modern in character, and the themes are typical of Salzedo's polish and natural refinement.

The second League of Composers recital was held at the Art Center, January 4, 1931. It introduced to America the fine Budapest String Quartet, already familiar to record collectors, as they are represented in the Victor catalogue. The quartet, composed of Emil Hauser, José Roisman, Stephen Ipolyi and Mischa Schneider, played the Hindemith *Quartet*, Op. 16, and the Kodály *Quartet*, Op. 10. Eugene Goossens, who is to lead the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra next year (recording companies take notice!), spoke enlighteningly on the subject of modern music and Aaron Copland played his *Piano Variations 1930*, a work more abstruse and radical than anything from his pen heard previously. Incidentally, we are all awaiting the recording of Copland's *Dance Symphony* which took one of the Victor prizes last year.

RICHARD GILBERT





ORCHESTRA

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to

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Miniature Score—Philharmonia No. 7.

It comes almost as a shock to find at this late date that the Victor catalogue still lacks three—two, now that Mengelberg has issued the *First*—of the nine Beethoven symphonies. With such gaps still present in the catalogue of a prominent company, it hardly seems feasible to complain, as is now becoming the fashion among the more gloomy and pessimistic collectors, that everything has been recorded. So, for that matter and by the same process of reasoning, has everything been published; yet the publishers, if we are correctly informed, thus far show no apparent signs of retiring from business. The art of music would be a sorry one indeed if everything worth being put in permanent form could be adequately recorded in only a few years. So that, everything considered, it is not an altogether unpleasant shock. The nine symphonies, for those impatient ones who can't wait and must have everything at once, are all available in more or less satisfactory form; and perhaps Victor's leisurely method of releasing the missing symphonies can be taken as an indication that greater care and effort will be expended on their recording.

That, at any rate, is the case with this new recording of Beethoven's *First Symphony*, which supports the above assumption admirably. The excellence of the set, indeed, thoroughly justifies its late appearance. In its essentials Beethoven's initial attempt at the symphonic form is far simpler and less significant than the mighty roars and sighs that followed. Beethoven here follows pretty closely the established style of the symphony; that is to say, he dons, for the moment, the clothes—at least all save those of a more intimate nature—of Mozart and Haydn. Well, they fit him most becomingly. The work thus contains few audacities, and those few are relatively negligible. Bach and Haydn and Mozart were guilty of similar misdemeanors, and some of far more consequence. But audacities alone don't make a symphony, and so Beethoven's lack of them here can readily be forgiven. It is a delightful and joyous work, and a good recording of it is therefore to be welcomed cordially. In the review of Pablo Casals' somewhat disappointing version of this symphony—in the August issue—a brief description of the piece was given, so that it is not necessary to cover the same ground again.

Mengelberg's reading is crisp, vigorous and broadly planned. He takes things at a brisk pace. At the time of the regrettable trouble between Mengelberg and Toscanini last year, the Philharmonic-Symphony may not have been as responsive as Mengelberg wished, but here it carries out his intentions with impressive skill and assurance. In each movement the recording, playing and even the music seem to improve, so that the last movement is really magnificent. Those who are collecting the nine Beethoven symphonies will find this to be the logical album to put at the beginning of the shelf.

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Five 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Set No. 151. \$7.50.

Sibelius' *En Saga*, Op. 9, though an early work has nothing whatever to do with calf love or a first shave. It has the credentials of maturity and is sterling Sibelius. Early in point of time, but in point of style very much later than *Finlandia* Op. 26, it is the John Baptist of Sibelius' work, the precursor of the great symphonic idiom that was to come later. In it was probably felt for the first time that rugged strength that belongs, of all modern composers, so peculiarly to Sibelius, and this work alone is sufficient to flout Dr. Adolf Weissmann's remarks, to be found in his *Problems of Modern Music*, about "the gentle art of Sibelius." If *En Saga* is gentle, then Strauss is a veritable gigolo and Ravel must be a marshmallow.

It is a sort of symphonic poem, but certainly not of the melodramatic theatrical variety; no program is forthcoming, but by the title we may suppose that we are listening to a tale of heroic achievement and adventure. Sibelius hurls huge chunks of gorgeous, snorting, crackling, cacophonous brass tone into his conception; he gives us icy cold string melismata as well as some of the warmth of a primitive hearth, where perhaps are gathered hardy folk from fen, fell, fjord and crag, listening to the well-known tale; anyone present can take up the story at any point and carry it on . . . and at the end of the music, the candle has perhaps burnt low and we as audience fade out of the scene . . . the tale goes on forever. Sibelius has suggested the endlessness pertaining to all sagas by much repetition of the chief tune of the work, but this point has been missed by the artistic conscience that supervised the making of these records, because a cut of seventy-seven measures has been perpetrated. This chief melody may be said to suggest the narrator, and the various timbres that color its repetitions give some clue as to the events he is describing.

The recording is thoroughly capable, but it tends to give the impression that Goossens is not very much in sympathy with what he is conducting; it is hardly played *con amore*. The string tone could well have been more beefy, and the brass more uncompromising. The beauty of the coda is greatly enhanced by some very poetic clarinet playing, and many fine points of the score are realized, but the tempo is rather too hurried, and one cannot get away from the idea that for some reason or other the work had to be crammed on to three record sides. The reason for this is difficult to imagine when on the fourth side we are treated to what must be the nine hundred ninety-ninth recording of the old war-horse *Valse Triste*. There are at least twenty Sibelius one-siders that we would all have welcomed, but all true Sibelians will want this set in spite of *Valse Triste*, and there is such a scarcity of the true Finnish vintage to hand that we all appreciate *En Saga* though it may be rather carelessly bottled.

The *Symphony No. 1* was reviewed in the December issue of *Disques* on page 398.

LAURENCE POWELL



**TSCHAI-
KOWSKY**

C-67868D

and

C-67869D

Romeo and Juliet: Fantasy Overture. Four sides. Played by Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Willem Mengelberg. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score—Eulenburg No. 675.

Those who like a pretty story along with their music should have a warm spot in their hearts for Tschaikowsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. For not only has this Fantasy Overture an especially attractive program, but in addition it was composed, so the tale runs, shortly after Tschaikowsky's ardent suit for the hand of the singer, Désirée Artôt, who seemed to be the only woman who ever really succeeded in making the composer's heart beat noticeably faster, had been summarily rejected. The fact that the work isn't even more popular, as popular, for example, as the same composer's masterpiece, the much-abused *Pathétique*, whose accompanying "story"—i. e., that Tschaikowsky, having completed the gloomy work, forthwith committed suicide—is decidedly inferior to the one commonly associated with *Romeo and Juliet*, should offer some slight consolation to those who are convinced that the general public infallibly prefers that work which has the most readily appealing "story" connected with it.

At any rate, *Romeo and Juliet*, even though it isn't performed so frequently as some of Tschaikowsky's other works, has certainly not suffered from want of adequate appreciation. Lawrence Gilman, whose prose is sometimes considerably more vivid and expressive than the subjects he writes about, has given the Fantasy Overture high praise. "The score," he has written, "is uneven; but at its best—and its best predominates—it is not only Tschaikowsky raised to the level of authentic genius, but it achieves for a few unforgettable moments a quality of utterance that justifies the heady epithet 'Shakespearian.' There are not many things in modern music more justly and beautifully expressive, more richly poetic, than the exquisite theme for muted and divided strings that projects the enraptured pair as they watch the coming of the dawn in Juliet's chamber. Here Tschaikowsky outdid himself; here, for a moment, he captured the very hue and accent of Shakespearian loveliness." This is uncommonly civil and should be noted, for it is the custom, just now, to speak a bit contemptuously of Tschaikowsky's works—if not contemptuously, then at least indulgently.

The work, suggested by Balakirew, was written in the Fall of 1869. It was rewritten the following Summer and published in 1871. Later, Tschaikowsky, not satisfied with the piece, rewrote it, and in its new form it was published in 1881.

Romeo and Juliet is not new to the gramophone audience. Stokowski recorded it several years ago, and his version seemed then, as, for that matter, it does now, to say all that is necessary on the subject. Mengelberg's stirring reading here is a good one, logically planned and admirably executed, but it is hard to reconcile it with Mr. Gilman's description, which fits more plausibly Stokowski's poetic and sensitive version. Mengelberg plays this music as rousing as he would the *1812 Overture*. His brass snarls and crackles and blazes magnificently, but his strings haven't the warmth and beauty of tone that distinguish Stokowski's. But the Concertgebouw Orchestra as a whole is reproduced more accurately, and small details come out with superb clarity. At the end there is an impressive roll on the tympani—a particularly realistic piece of reproduction, incidentally—that is lacking in the Stokowski set. The recording is thoroughly adequate, and in places quite thrilling, throughout the piece.

WAGNER
B-90120

The Flying Dutchman: Overture. Two sides. Played by Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Richard Strauss.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.



Miniature Score—Philharmonia No. 20.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOW
B-90122

Le Coq d'Or: Introduction and Bridal Cortège. Two sides. Played by Lamoureux Orchestra, Paris, conducted by Albert Wolff.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Score—Philharmonia No. 279.

MOUSSORGSKY
RIMSKY-KORSAKOW
SAINT-SAËNS
B-90121

(a) The Fair at Sorochintzky: Gopak. (Moussorgsky.) (b) Flight of the Bumble Bee. (Rimsky-Korsakow.) (c) Romance in F Minor for French Horn. (Saint-Saëns.) Two sides. Played by Lamoureux Orchestra, Paris, conducted by Albert Wolff.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

When Wagner's *Flying Dutchman* was recently revived at the Metropolitan, most of those who heard and saw the production agreed that the Overture remains far and away the most notable and arresting part of the work. It constitutes an effective prelude to the opera, but considered separately, apart from the drama, it is equally effective. Full of vigor and power, it seizes the attention at once and holds it to the end. Richard Strauss, whose list of recordings is rapidly reaching sizeable proportions, manages the Overture very successfully here. His reading is quick, deft and vivid. Under his practiced baton, the Berlin Philharmonic performs smoothly and stirringly. Dr. Blech several years ago made a good record of this Overture for Victor, and it seemed then quite competently produced, but Strauss' is a good deal better. It is, in fact, the finest domestic version available. The recording, save in one or two spots, is thrillingly full, clear and realistic . . . Albert Coates recently made an exceptionally fine recording of the *Coq d'Or* music—so fine, indeed, that Victor deemed it worth while to repress the disc almost immediately. Wolff's version will, of course, challenge comparison with Coates', and it would be an extremely difficult matter to choose between them. Both are beautifully played and both are superbly recorded. The music itself is colorful and attractive . . . *The Fair at Sorochintzky*, Moussorgsky's unfinished opera, was produced at the Metropolitan last Fall, without, however, arousing more than mild interest and applause. The *Gopak*, which forms the conclusion of the work, is a delightful little dance, full of life, color and motion. Wolff plays it deftly and with exceeding animation . . . The thrice familiar *Flight of the Bumble Bee* is accorded similar treatment, and the two pieces, both occupying the same side of the disc, are delightfully recorded and played . . . But the Saint-Saëns *Romance*, on the reverse side, is utterly lifeless, stiff, dull and tiresome. The performance, too, is not much better.

MOZART

C-G55226F
and
C-G55228F

Eine kleine Nachtmusic. Four sides. Played by Symphony Orchestra conducted by Frederick Weissmann.
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

Good recording and commendable playing make this a thoroughly satisfactory little set. It comes from the Columbia foreign list.

**GLINKA****V-D1856**

IMPORTED

Kamarinskaïa. Two sides. Played by London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Miniature Score—Eulenburg No. 834.

**MOUSSORG-
SKY****V-AW179**

IMPORTED

Khowantchina: Persian Dances. Two sides. Played by London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

**RIMSKY-
KORSAKOW****V-W1098**

and

V-W1099

IMPORTED

Spanish Caprice. Four sides. Played by London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Coates. Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score—Eulenburg No. 842.

**GLAZOUNOW
DELIBES****C-67849D**

to

C-67853D

The Seasons: Ballet. (Glazounow, Op. 67.) Played by Symphony Orchestra conducted by Alexandre Glazounow. Nine sides and Naila: Pas des Fleurs. (Delibes.) One side. Played by Lucerne Kursaal Orchestra. Five 12-inch discs in album. Columbia Modern Music Album Set No. 5. \$7.50.

GLAZOUNOW**V-C1752**

to

V-C1754

IMPORTED

Scènes de Ballet, Op. 52. Six sides. Played by New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugene Goossens. Three 12-inch discs. \$1.75 each.

Albert Coates' beguiling way with Russian music is widely known and properly esteemed, and in Glinka's tone poem, *Kamarinskaïa*, played by Toscanini with the Philharmonic-Symphony this Winter, he has a piece admirably adapted to his robust, lusty methods of conducting. The work, written in 1848, is based on a couple of wedding songs and dance tunes, and its simple gayety, genial charm and reckless spontaneity are highly attractive, if not greatly important. The London Symphony responds gracefully, and the recorders have quite outdone themselves in getting the piece on the record properly. The reproduction, indeed, deserves the utmost praise, for it is just about flawless . . . Of almost equal appeal are the *Persian Dances* from Moussorgsky's *Khowantchina*, which are presented with similar competence and verve by the same organization and conductor. The rich Oriental coloring is brought out perfectly, and the whole affair is altogether delightful . . . The familiar *Spanish Caprice* is given a vivid interpretation here, and the recording is splendidly full.

Admirers of Glazounow and in particular those who are fond of his ballet music have plenty to attract their attention this month, which produces, among other things, recordings of the composer's ballet suites, *The Seasons* and *Scènes de Ballet*. The former was reviewed on page 359 of the November issue of *Disques*, when the imported pressings were discussed. The same excellent recording has been preserved in the local Columbia Company's repressings . . . *Scènes de Ballet*, like *The*

Seasons, has nothing of much consequence to offer, but it is pleasant enough in small doses. Glazounow's ballet music reminds one of nothing so much as a high-class three ring circus: it is just as gay, active, tawdry and fundamentally unimportant. It grows wearisome quite as quickly, too.



Some of these pieces have been recorded before. The Philadelphia Orchestra released *Danse Oriental*, one of the most commonplace numbers in the suite, a few years ago, and *Pas d'action* served to fill out the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's recent set of Schumann's *First Symphony*. All the numbers in this suite are scored with an almost excessive opulence, but there are occasional felicitous touches that help relieve the monotony that music of this sort tends to engender. In addition to the two numbers mentioned above, there are six others: *Preamble*, *Marionettes*, *Mazurka*, *Scherzino*, *Valse* and *Polonaise*. *Preamble* and *Polonaise* are somewhat less sticky, and in consequence more appealing, than the others. Eugene Goossens, who ought to appear in the supplements more frequently, leads the New Symphony Orchestra through a deft, animated performance of the work, and the recording is as clear, full, rich and well balanced as that in *The Seasons* set, which is high praise indeed.

RAVEL

V-7370
and
V-7371

{ Ma Mère l'Oye. Four sides. Played by Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky.
Two 12-inch discs. \$2 each.

Miniature Score—Durand et Cie.

The rush for Ravel recordings is apparently still in full swing, and surely not even the most exacting can reasonably cavil with the efficient manner in which the companies are meeting the demand. Ravel at least is getting his full share of attention. With *Daphnis et Chloé* and *Bolero* behind them, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Koussevitzky now tackle *Ma Mère l'Oye*. The results, like those obtained in *Daphnis et Chloé*, are only moderately successful. The Boston band has a beautiful, suave tone, but only part of it seems to get on these records, and the recording lacks the clarity that modern reproduction at its best is capable of giving. These faults are not major ones, but they prevent the set from being recommended without reservations.

First written as a piano duet in 1908, *Ma Mère l'Oye* was later orchestrated and arranged into ballet form; in that arrangement it was first given at the Theatre des Arts, Paris, in 1912. The suite consists of five little fantasies, four of which are based on well-known fairy tales. The various sections carry the following titles: *Pavanne of the Sleeping Beauty*; *Hop-o'-My-Thumb*; *Laideronette, Empress of the Pagodas*; *Conversations of Beauty and the Beast*, and the *Fairy Garden*. The music, though originally designed as entertainment for children, is by no means to be dismissed thus lightly, for it provides capital entertainment for adults, too, to whom, on the whole, it doubtless exerts by far the strongest appeal. Ravel's followers make much of his ability to hide his emotions under an ironic smile, but sometimes, as in parts of this suite, he somehow forgets the smile, and then, unhampered, his emotions hold full sway. Being the emotions of a cultivated and urbane gentleman, the effect is not unpleasing, and frequently it is very attractive.

Koussevitzky plays the music delightfully, and the Boston Orchestra shows the results of thorough drilling. One could only wish for recording a shade less vague and muddy.



COPPOLA
V-W1106
IMPORTED

{ Interlude Dramatique. Two sides. Played by Paris Symphony Orchestra conducted by Pierre Monteux. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

RABAUD
O-166.278
and
O-166.279
IMPORTED

{ Divertissement on Russian Songs. Four sides. Played by Symphony Orchestra conducted by Henri Rabaud.
Two 10-inch discs. \$1.25 each.

MENDELSSOHN
O-170.114
IMPORTED

{ Symphony No. 4 in A Major (Italian): Andante. Two sides.
Played by Symphony Orchestra conducted by G. Cloez.

Miniature Score—Philharmonia No. 82.

Nearly all the prominent French recording conductors are also represented in the catalogues as composers, usually conducting their own works. Coppola, Gaubert and Pierné have occasionally practiced this pleasant habit, with more or less enjoyable results. Now Pierre Monteux, giving Coppola a rest and a compliment at the same time, issues the latter's *Interlude Dramatique*. "Fantastic, joyous, ironic"—these adjectives were utilized by someone in describing the mood of Coppola's *Burlesque*, also available on records. They apply with equal effect to the *Interlude Dramatique*. Scored for a large orchestra, the piece shows numerous influences, and it is full of engaging effects. Now and then the general fuss and commotion stops, and a solo instrument sings a plaintive, somewhat sentimental melody. The piece, whatever its faults, has plenty of life. On the whole, however, Coppola is to be preferred on the conductor's podium. His colleague, Monteux, plays the music superlatively, and the recording is about as good as modern reproduction can possibly be . . . Rabaud's *Divertissement on Russian Songs* is called a symphonic poem. It is a very inferior one. Its themes are banal and obvious, and not much is done with them. The orchestra plays passably under the composer's direction; the recording is excellent.

It seems a bit odd to find a company issuing a single movement from a symphony of Mendelssohn's. Why not the whole lovely work? The *Italian* Symphony is bound to be recorded in its entirety sooner or later, and no better time could be found than the present. Cloez presents the *Andante* here. A smoothly flowing and well turned piece of work, it makes a delightful record. The recording is good, but the interpretation is only fair. Cloez' orchestra is second-rate.

BACH-GOUNOD SCHUBERT
V-36029

{ Ave Maria (Bach-Gounod.) One side and
Ave Maria, Op. 52, No. 6. (Schubert.) One side. Both played
by Victor Concert Orchestra conducted by Rosario Bourdon.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The recording and interpretation of these two thrice familiar pieces are excellent, and to those who haven't them and still want them this disc can be recommended.

CONCERTO



POULENC
C-LF33
to
C-LF35
IMPORTED

Aubade: Concerto chorégraphique pour piano et 18 instruments.
Six sides. Played by Francis Poulenc (Piano) and Orchestre
des Concerts Straram conducted by Walter Straram.
Three 10-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Francis Poulenc is one of the two youngest members (the other is Georges Auric) of the notorious Group of Six, formed in Paris in 1919. Poulenc was born in 1899; the Zodiac must have been particularly favorable to him: there was hardly any element of struggle in his career, nor in his music, for that matter. As many of the younger Parisians, he was launched by the late Serge Diaguilev, the head of the Russian Ballet. Ballet music should naturally be cheerful—even Russian ballet music. Poulenc has vitality a-plenty, in addition to a healthy gift of melodic invention. Born into this unprincipled century, he cares little where he gets his inspiration, and his compositions are rich in reminiscences and direct quotations. The *Aubade* (which is French for a morning Serenade) is eclectic in more senses than one; listening to it, we feel like saying, "I remember you from somewhere," and often there is no difficulty in locating that somewhere. Prokofieff is Poulenc's most patent source of inspiration. The *Toccata* (side One) is extremely suggestive of Prokofieff's *Overture on Hebrew Themes*, particularly in the treatment of the piano. Strawinsky is all but directly quoted in *Allegro Feroce* (side Five). Quite unexpectedly, Richard Strauss is heard immediately after (a quotation from *Till Eulenspiegel*). The *Andante* (side Four) is pure Beethoven (until it gets slightly discordant). There are passages from both Liszt Concertos, with the erstwhile despised diminished seventh chord in broken arpeggios spread all over the keyboard. For those operatically inclined there is a phrase from *Rigoletto*. Borodin's Polovetian Dances are represented at the end of the *Rondeau* (side Two), but the original trombone figure is here given to the horn. Honegger's locomotive theme song from the *Pacific* supplies the thematic material for the opening measures of the first movement (*Recitatif*).

But what of it? As long as all these shreds and patches are woven into a pleasantly motley fabric, we really should not cavil. Little respect for private property is a sign of the times, and the copyright laws are not infringed unless the quotation exceeds four measures in length. Isn't the entire jazz industry based on direct quotations?

Mr. Poulenc is an expert arranger, and the orchestration for eighteen instruments with the piano solo, played by the composer, is wholly delightful. Probably the best part of the suite is the conclusion—an extended coda, moving at a slow pace in a minor key, suffused with an inexpressible nostalgia. The orchestra, under the direction of Walter Straram, does excellent work, although the wind instruments might have been better in tune. The Columbia recording is splendid, and the several instruments come out without a blemish. The Poulenc set is altogether a pleasurable affair.

NICOLAS SLONIMSKY

**BOSSI****PD-95326**

and

PD-95327

IMPORTED

Concerto for Organ and Orchestra. Four sides. Played by Kurt Grosse (Organ) and orchestra conducted by Manfred Gurlitt. Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Marco Enrico Bossi, noted principally for his organ pieces, was born at Salò, Lake Garda, in 1861. One of his teachers was the opera composer, Ponchielli. He won considerable fame as an organist, maintaining, *Grove's* says, "the highest and best traditions of the Italian school of the past . . ." He attempted opera in his early days, but none of the three that he composed was successful, and so he turned to organ and choral music. Motets, cantatas, masses, sacred works, a symphonic poem, chamber music and works for orchestra and chorus figure largely in his list of compositions. In 1925, after a successful tour of the United States, Bossi died at sea between New York and Le Havre.

The two movements of the *Concerto* for Organ and Orchestra given here are mildly effective, but they lack substance. The second movement, *Adagio ma non troppo*, save for a brief moment toward the end, when the music swells to an impressive climax, is pleasantly sentimental, and the third movement, *Allegro*, is negligible. It is agreeable, inconsequential music, nice to listen to, but on the whole it doesn't say very much.

The orchestra is a small one, but it plays quite well and is splendidly balanced with the organ, which is reproduced convincingly. Kurt Grosse plays the organ part competently. The recording is excellent throughout the set.



PIANO

**BARTOK
RAMEAU****C-2354D**

Allegro Barbaro. (Bartók.) One side and
Minuet in G Major. (Rameau.) One side. Both played by
Gil Marchex (Piano).
One 10-inch disc. 75c.

**POULENC
D'ERLANGER****V-B3638**

IMPORTED

Novelette. (Poulenc.) One side and
Etude Concertante No. 2. (D'Erlanger.) One side. Both
played by Mark Hambourg (Piano).
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

No sharper and more abrupt contrast could well be imagined than that afforded by the Rameau and Bartók numbers. The Bartók is forceful, ponderous and lumbering; the Rameau light, graceful and delicate. The pianist, Gil Marchex, who seems to be a newcomer to the gramophone, is equally skilful in each, and the recording is superb. . . . Mark Hambourg's selections are negligible. Neither Poulenc nor D'Erlanger emerges from these pieces as a composer of much dignity. The recording is full and clear.

CHOPIN**V-1489**

to

V-1492

Sonata in B Flat Minor, Op. 35. Seven sides and
Waltz in E Minor. One side. Both played by Sergei Rach-
maninoff (Piano).
Four 10-inch discs in album. Victor Set M-95. \$6.50.

**PA-9520****IMPORTED**

Waltz in C Sharp Minor, Op. 64, No. 2. One side and
Waltz in E Minor. One side. Both played by Moritz Rosenthal
(Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

O-171.107**IMPORTED**

Chant Polonais. (Chopin-Liszt.) One side and
Mazurka, Op. 24, No. 4. One side. Both played by Moritz
Rosenthal (Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

With two salient pianists like Rachmaninoff and Rosenthal on the lists this month, we are assured of some memorable piano playing. Rachmaninoff, playing Chopin's *Sonata in B Flat Minor*, Op. 35, thus selects more substantial material than Rosenthal, who essays four slight, but attractive, Chopin pieces . . . The *Sonata* was an especial favorite of Hunecker's, whose description of the work (contained in *Chopin, The Man and His Music*) is well worth quoting:

Notwithstanding the grandeur and beauty of the grave, the power and passion of the scherzo, this Sonata in B flat minor is not more a sonata than it is a sequence of ballades and scherzi. And again we are at the de Maupassant crux. The work never could be spared; it is Chopin mounted for action and in the thick of the fight. The doppio movimento is pulse-stirring—a strong, curt and characteristic theme for treatment. Here is power, and in the expanding prologue flashes more than a hint of the tragic. The D flat Melody is soothing, charged with magnetism, and urged to a splendid fever of climax. The working out section is too short and dissonantal, but there is development, perhaps more technical than logical—I mean by this more pianistic than intellectually musical—and we mount with the composer until the B flat version of the first subject, strange to say, does not return. From then on to the firm chords of the close there is no misstep, no faltering, or obscurity. Noble pages have been read, and the scherzo is approached with eagerness . . . It is simply unapproachable, and has no equal for lucidity, brevity and polish among the works of Chopin, except the Scherzo in C sharp minor; but there is less irony, more muscularity, and more native sweetness in this E flat minor Scherzo . . . And then follows that deadly Marche Funèbre! . . . Chopin is seldom so realistic; here are the bell-like basses, the morbid coloring . . . The presto is too wonderful for words . . . Its agitated, whirring, unharmonized triplets are strangely disquieting, and can never be mistaken for mere étude passage work. The movement is too sombre, its curves too full of half-suppressed meanings, its rush and sub-human growling too expressive of something that defies definition.

After this there is little to say save that Rachmaninoff plays the work with superb poise and power. The recording, like all recent Victor piano recording, is full, deep, rich and fairly accurate. The little posthumous waltz which fills out the set is enjoyable; it is also played by Rosenthal, whose performance is fresh, sparkling and profoundly expressive. He seems, in fact, to get more of himself on these two records than the majority of pianists can get in a whole shelf of albums. The recording is excellent.

**BEETHOVEN****B-90123**
and
B-90124

Sonata in E Flat Major, Op. 81a. Four sides. Played by Wilhelm Kempff (Piano).
Two 12-inch discs. \$1.50 each.

Since comments on this music were included in the review of Godowsky's Columbia recording of the *Sonata in E Flat*, published in the October issue of *Disques*, there is no necessity of repeating those notes here. The work, dealing with the farewell, absence and return of a friend—whose sex the commentators have a merry time determining, though Beethoven marked clearly on the score that the absence referred to was that of the Archduke Rudolph—is expressive and striking. Many will probably find that, while Godowsky's reading is, on the whole, somewhat superior to Kempff's, the latter enjoys the more realistic and accurate recording. That, in fact, is the feature of this new version.

CHABRIER**C-LF24**
IMPORTED

Bourrée fantasque. Two sides. Played by Marcelle Meyer (Piano). One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

DEBUSSY**C-LFX24**
IMPORTED

Valse—La Plus que lent. One side and
Jardins sous la pluie (extract from Estampes). One side. Both played by Marguerite Long (Piano). One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Bourrée fantasque here achieves first phonographic reproduction in its original form. This rather boisterous and highly colored piece has been made familiar to collectors through the several previously released orchestrations. Mlle. Meyer plays the piece well; she gives it just the amount of ruggedness required, yet does not lose sight of the fact that it contains some unusual (for the latter part of the nineteenth century) harmonic modulations. That Chabrier influenced Ravel and Debussy to a small extent, there can be no doubt. Marcelle Meyer will be recalled as the recorder of Stravinsky's ever-popular *Ragtime* (V-W727). She is well known throughout the continent as an interpreter of modern and ultra-modern piano works.

The two Debussy pieces, as played by Madame Long, are disappointing interpretations, to say the least. Their release brings nothing new to the gramophone; *Jardins sous la pluie*, played by Gaillard (O-171.057), is a much superior performance and Giesecking's playing of the familiar *Waltz* will, in my estimation, never be bettered—it is just about perfect. The first piece is played here with only slight impressionistic effect, and the second labors under a too great concern for dynamics which the composer certainly never intended. The pedal is used to disadvantage throughout both selections; one feels that the pianistic means never achieve their intended effect. There are other defects in technique. The recording is a bit peculiar; a slight noise, like a rush of air—perhaps from the generator—tends to spoil otherwise satisfactory reproduction.

R. G.

**SCHUBERT-
GODOWSKY
CHOPIN****C-2358D**

Wiegenlied. (Schubert-Godowsky). One side and
Waltz in G Flat. (Chopin). One side. Both played by José Echaniz (Piano). One 10-inch disc. 75c.

This is an enjoyable little disc, attractively played and clearly recorded.

CHAMBER MUSIC



BACH
V-DB1434
IMPORTED { Sonata in G Major. Two sides. Played by Adolf Busch (Violin)
and Rudolf Serkin (Piano).
One 12-inch disc. \$2.50.

MOZART
V-DB1429
to
V-DB1431
IMPORTED { Sonata in B Flat Major (K. 454). Six sides. Played by Erica
Morini (Violin) and Ludwig Kentner (Piano).
Three 12-inch discs. \$2.50 each.

The cult of Bach has given rise to an activity on behalf of the lost work of the Master. It is claimed that so far only about four-fifths of his work has been brought out; that the rest is either irretrievably lost or scattered throughout Christendom, awaiting the eyes of the faithful while serving as a speculation for the musical doctor and hope for the publisher. Only the wish may be responsible for the belief, but it is a fact that from time to time, through the midwifery of the Bachgesellschaft, a new manuscript of Bach sees the light.

How can we be sure it's Bach's work? Only by expert scholarship brought to bear on the evidence: reference to his works in contemporary letters, his handwriting, internal evidence and luck. It is unavoidable, of course, that apocrypha creep in, and the Bachgesellschaft itself acknowledges at least several spurious cantatas in its volumes. External evidence can lead no further than presumption. Bach had a habit of copying others' work that he liked; he may have employed copyists, and as for references to him: his family was so numerous and musical that the name "Bach" came to be a generic term for musicians. Internal evidence, the music itself, is the most reliable test, since, when the moneyed interests are not involved, it is never a question of scholars' honesty. Soon, perhaps, when recording plants will have put out all the available supply of music and a new Bach work will be at a premium, a forgery, like Louys' *Chansons de Bilitis* or MacPherson's *Fingal*, will be in order. Demand breeds a racket, and a racket breeds supply. Capone will study German and counterpoint, and play ghost for Bach.

Two years ago, in a private collection at Eisenach, the manuscript of a sonata for violin and figured bass was found written in Bach's hand. What is significant is that the figured bass and the key signature, G major, are the same as those of the Trio for Flute, Violin and figured bass, but the melody is different. The great fact is the identity of both basses. For in classic composition, given the bass, the upper voices are delimited quite narrowly.

Now a comparison of the two works shows decidedly the higher qualities of the melodic line in the sonata, a melancholy beauty that is characteristic of Bach, and which, coupled with the fact that it is even phrased for the violin by Bach's hand, is undeniable proof that the sonata, at least, is an authentic work of the Master. As for the Trio, what would be more natural than that a teacher of theory should offer to a student a bass to work out? In any case, it is a remarkable work, distinguished from his other sonatas by its non-contrapuntal treatment, and therefore



miniature form. Mr. Busch, who performs it, is very satisfactory mainly because he lets Bach speak for himself.

Erica Morini, who fiddles in the Mozart release, is of another class of virtuosi, the bouncing type, with an aggressive and personal tone, very affettuoso and gorgeously fiddlistic; the popular kind violinists openly despise and secretly envy. The sonata is the fifteenth in the collection of eighteen gems and one of the most brilliant, marked with bravura and daintiness, sadly-gay tunes and formality. Concerning these well-known qualities, there is a schoolboy estimate of Mozart, quite the standard thing, which refers to clarity and serenity. These are the same blessings showered by commentators—Lytton Strachey excepted—upon Shakespeare as seen through his later plays. The comment, I believe, is just as superficial in either case and comes from mistaking the manner for the man. With Shakespeare the mistake arises out of drawing a moral from *The Tempest*. With Mozart it is the control of form and harmonic emphasis.

I think, however, that Mozart has the same romantic appeal as has his disciple, Beethoven, only he rounds those anfractuosities of feeling and crystallizes his passion, making it communicative enough to be suffered. His emotions are one thing, and out of them his art becomes another. That is the way of the gentleman and man of the world.

JOSEPH COTTLER

MARCELLO

HO-4-3652

IMPORTED

Sonata in F Major: Largo and Allegro. Two sides. Played by Alice Ehlers (Cembalo) and Rudolf Hindemith (Violoncello). One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

Benedetto Marcello, poet and composer, was born in Venice in 1686 and died at Brescia in 1739. In his youth he is said to have been somewhat lively, but with the arrival of middle age he adopted a more decorous method of living. He played the violin passably, but devoted most of his time to singing and composition, neither of which, however, had the approval of his father, and so he was compelled to study law. He held several important government posts, but nonetheless managed somehow to continue his study of music. His greatest work is said to be *Estro poetico-armonico, Parafrasi sopra i primi 50 Psalmi, Poesia di Girolamo Giustiniani*, which appeared in eight volumes. Composed for one, two, three and four voices, with figured basses and occasionally two violins and 'cellos obbligati, they are said to be superior to anything of their kind. *Grove's*, indeed, pronounces them to be "one of the finest productions of musical literature."

The *Sonata in F Major* given here is an enjoyable work. It is, by turns, slow and melancholy, and fast and lively, and the melodies are charmingly simple and attractive. Alice Ehlers and Rudolf Hindemith, playing the cembalo and 'cello, respectively, are competent artists, and the two instruments make an effective combination. The recording is excellent, and so is the surface.

**TSCHAIKOWSKY
DE BERIOT
C-50271D**

Chant Sans Paroles. (Tschaikowsky-Sear). One side and
Scène de Ballet. (de Beriot-Sear). One side. Both played by
J. H. Squire Celeste Octet. One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

The music is tuneful and light, the playing smooth and well recorded.

OPERA



MOZART
B-90125

The Marriage of Figaro: Crudel, perche finora farmi. One side and
The Magic Flute: Oh cara Armonia. One side. Both sung by Felicie Hüni-Mihacsek (Soprano), Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender (Baritone) and Gerhard Witting (Tenor), with Berlin State Opera Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Julius Prüwer. One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

Miniature Scores—Eulenburg Nos. 916 and 912.

MOZART
THOMAS
V-6642

The Magic Flute: Act 2—Invocation. (Mozart.) One side and Mignon: Act 3—De son coeur j'ai caime la fievre (Berceuse). (Thomas.) One side. Both sung by Ezio Pinza (Bass) with orchestra. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

DONIZETTI
V-7369

Lucia di Lammermoor: Act 3—Mad Scene. Two sides. Sung by Lily Pons (Soprano) with orchestra. Flute obbligato: George Possell. One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Brunswick has been issuing some notable Mozart discs of late, and the two numbers above are among the most attractive available. The *Marriage of Figaro* duet comes shortly after the beginning of Act 3, where Susanna agrees to meet the Count in the garden. The music is delightful, and it is presented with fine skill by Domgraf-Fassbaender and Felice Hüni-Mihacsek, who made a favorable impression with two *Don Giovanni* selections last month. The voices blend well, and Julius Prüwer's accompaniment is, as usual, thoroughly fine. . . . On the reverse side is the duet and chorus *O cara Armonia* from Act 1 of the *Magic Flute*, rendered with spirit and verve. The recording is admirable. . . . Ezio Pinza's number occurs near the beginning of Act 2, and the parts for the chorus are omitted. Pinza invokes Isis and Osiris very convincingly. . . . The Mignon selection is less interesting, but it is capably presented.

Victor's release of the Lily Pons disc is an especially timely one, for it follows hard upon this remarkable French coloratura soprano's American début January 3 in *Lucia* at the Metropolitan. That début was an extraordinarily successful one, and the singer earned columns of praise in the newspapers. She is a pupil of Alfred Sellier, of the Paris Opéra, and Mme. Beumer, of the Opéra-Comique. She also studied piano at the Paris Conservatoire. Her operatic début was made at Mulhouse, Alsace, in 1927. She sings here the well-known *Mad Scene* from *Lucia*. Displaying a flexible voice of beautiful quality and delightful freshness, her performance is effective and deftly turned. A flute obbligato is contributed by George Possell. The chorus is omitted.

COLUMBIA MASTERWORKS*

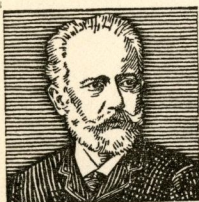
—New Issues—

SIBELIUS SYMPHONY No. 1, IN E MINOR. This magnificent symphony is a fit companion for the same composer's Second, issued by Columbia last month, the two releases constituting an event unique in recording history. Again the plaintive and beautiful folk-music idiom of the Finnish people finds expression in the magical harmonies and inspired figures of melody of which Sibelius is master. Increasing familiarity with these wonderful themes has steadily increased the number of Sibelius devotees during the thirty-two years since this symphony was first performed.



Columbia Masterworks Set No. 151

Sibelius: Symphony No. 1, in E Minor, Op. 39. By Robert Kajanus and Symphony Orchestra. In 9 parts. On Five Twelve-Inch Records. \$7.50 with album.



TSCHAIKOWSKY ROMEO AND JULIET—FANTASY OVERTURE FOR ORCHESTRA. Tchaikovsky's tonal conception of the world's greatest love story no longer excites the antagonism which greeted its first hearing—on the contrary it is now regarded as one of music's most glowing fragments of tone-poesy. This new recording by Mengelberg and his famous orchestra has attracted wide attention for the astoundingly faithful reproduction of the timpani passages which have been so frequently the despair of the recording engineer.

Columbia Records Nos. 67868-D—67869-D. \$2.00 each.

Tschaikowsky: Romeo and Juliet—Fantasy Overture for Orchestra. By Willem Mengelberg and Concertgebouw Orchestra, of Amsterdam.

COLUMBIA MODERN MUSIC ALBUM SETS

GLAZOUNOV THE SEASONS—BALLET. This delightful ballet, containing some of the most striking and brilliant effects ever heard in music for the stage, is now, in response to many demands, given American issue. The composer's own conducting adds the climactic element of interest to this fresh and sparkling work.

Columbia Modern Music Album Set No. 5

Glazounov: The Seasons—Ballet. By Alexandre Glazounov and Symphony Orchestra. In Nine Parts, on Five Twelve-Inch Records. \$7.50 with album.



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"Magic Notes"

WAGNER
PONCHIELLI
C-50268D

Die Meistersinger: Procession of the Mastersingers. (Wagner.)
One side and
La Gioconda: Marinaresca. (Ponchielli.) One side. Both
sung by Chorus of La Scala Theatre, Milan, with orchestra.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.



WAGNER
V-C1899
IMPORTED

Lohengrin: (a) Das susse lied verhallt; (b) Ist dies nur liebe.
Two sides. Sung by Kate Heidersbach (Soprano) and Max
Lorenz (Tenor), with Berlin State Opera Orchestra conducted
by Clemens Schmalstich. One 12-inch disc. \$1.75.

PUCCINI
PD-95352
IMPORTED

Turandot: (a) Non piangere; (b) Nessun dorma! Two sides.
Both sung by Alfred Piccaver (Tenor), with orchestra con-
ducted by Julius Prüwer.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.50.

ROSSINI
BIZET
C-50266D

Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Se il mio nome. (Rossini.) Sung by
Dino Borgioli (Tenor), with harp accompaniment. One side and
I Pescatori di Perle: Del tempio al limitar. (Bizet.) One side.
Sung by Dino Borgioli (Tenor) and Gino Vanelli (Baritone),
with orchestra.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

Of the two numbers given by La Scala Chorus, the *Meistersinger* selection is, of course, the more valuable, even though the *Gioconda* is less familiar, so that it is regrettable that in the former the recording is inferior. The orchestral passage that precedes the entry of the voices is not so clean-cut as we have come to expect in present-day recordings, and the voices reveal a lamentable tendency to blur. The singing, on the other hand, is admirably vigorous and well done. . . . The *Gioconda* selection enjoys the advantages of good singing, good orchestral playing and, above all, clear recording. The music is attractive. . . . Max Lorenz, one of the leading tenors of the Dresden State Opera and considered one of the finest tenors in Germany today, is to appear in Wagnerian rôles at the Metropolitan next season, according to a current rumor. With Kate Heidersbach and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra under Clemens Schmalstich, he has made a commendable disc of the love duet from *Lohengrin*. His voice is clear and of good quality. Kate Heidersbach, an unfamiliar name, sings her part with similar competence. The orchestral part is finely played, and the recording measures up to the high standard of the interpretation. . . . The *Turandot* music is rich and tends, now and then, to cloy, but it suits Piccaver's excellent voice admirably, and his interpretations are consequently beyond reproach. The same can be said of the orchestral accompaniment supplied by the ever-reliable Julius Prüwer. . . . Dino Borgioli made his New York début in a recital on December 10, 1930. He has a voice of impressive beauty, and its good qualities have been preserved in the recording above. In the *Barbiere di Siviglia* a harp provides the accompaniment, while in the duet with Gino Vanelli, an orchestra supplies it.

Musical Masterpieces

Beethoven's Symphony No. 1 in C Major. Played by the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York under the direction of Willem Mengelberg, on four 12-inch Victor Records in Album M-73 (Nos. 7211-7214). In Automatic sequence Album AM-73 (Nos. 7215-7218). List Price, \$8.00.

Here is a recording which will be of great interest to students and discriminating music lovers, for it gives the opportunity of becoming thoroughly acquainted with the music of the FIRST of the glorious symphonies which brought fame to the name of Beethoven. An undue preference for certain of the nine has so overshadowed the others, that opportunities to hear them have become negligible. Recently orchestral conductors here and in Europe have rescued from seeming oblivion this first Symphony in C Major, which bears the early opus number 21. Beethoven, in essaying composition in larger form for the first time, was quite naturally influenced by Haydn and Mozart . . . yet the qualities which mark the originality of the young genius are by no means suppressed. Here are humor, sturdiness, and even daring! For example, the Minuet, which served as a model for the third movement of a Symphony, became, with Beethoven, a thing of speed and lightness which, although written in the established triple rhythm, was quite different from its predecessors.


This music, which caused a sensation when it was first performed under the composer's direction, is interpreted by Mengelberg and the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra with the meticulous attention to detail for which this leader is famous. As a link between the symphonic works of his predecessors and his own eight other symphonies, this Symphony No. 1 in C Major by Beethoven takes on a meaning that is of historic as well as melodic value.

Sonata in B Flat Minor, Opus 35, by Chopin. Played by Sergi Rachmaninoff on four double-faced 10-inch Victor Records in Album M-95 (Nos. 1489-1492). In Automatic sequence Album AM-95 (Nos. 1493-1496). List Price, \$6.50.

Like many a new work, this Sonata was the center of much discussion. Even Schumann, admirer and champion of Chopin agreed with critics who said that it lacked form and continuity. Considering its popularity in our time, such criticism seems almost incredible, for it not only ranks as Chopin's greatest composition in larger form, but is regarded as one of the most beautiful contributions to piano literature. There is no doubt as to the haunting beauty of its melodies . . . some of them the loveliest Chopin ever wrote. And to have them perpetuated by so great an artist as Rachmaninoff is indeed a boon to the lover of recorded music. Anyone who has had the good fortune to hear this great artist play the B Flat Minor Sonata will delight in his records . . . anyone unfamiliar with his interpretation of it has a thrill in store! Here is an Album which no lover of piano music will be able to resist.



Victor Division
R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

- DONIZETTI**
C-4109X { Don Pasquale: (a) Serenata; (b) Sogno soave e casto. Two sides. Both sung by Nino Ederle (Tenor), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c. 
- PUCCINI**
C-4108X { La Fanciulla del West: (a) Or son sei mesi; (b) Ch'ella mi creda. Two sides. Both sung by Aroldo Lindi (Tenor), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- BOITO**
C-4151X { Mefistofele: (a) Dai campi, dai prati; (b) Spunta l'aurora pallida. Two sides. Sung by (a) Lionello Cecil (Tenor) and (b) Lina Bruna Rasa (Soprano), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- BOITO**
GIORDANO
C-4010X { Mefistofele: Giunto sul passo estremo. (Boito.) One side and Andrea Chenier: Si fui soldato. (Giordano.) One side. Both sung by Paolo Civil (Tenor), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- BOITO**
C-4113X { Nerone: (a) Vivete in pace; (b) Ecco il magico specchio. Two sides. Both sung by Enrico Molinari (Baritone), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- VERDI**
GOUNOD
C-4123X { Il Trovatore: Stride la va vampa. (Verdi.) One side and Faust: Le parlate d'amor. (Gounod.) One side. Both sung by Conchita Velasquez (Mezzo-Soprano), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- VERDI**
GIORDANO
C-4106X { Il Trovatore: Ah! si ben mio. (Verdi.) One side and Fedora: Racconto di Loris. (Giordano.) One side. Both sung by Carmelo Alabiso (Tenor), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- MASSENET**
THOMAS
C-4111X { Manon: Ah! dispar vision. (Massenet.) One side and Mignon: Addio Mignon. (Thomas.) One side. Both sung by Lionello Cecil (Tenor), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- LEON-CAVALLO**
PUCCINI
C-4107X { I Pagliacci: Stridoro lassu. (Leoncavallo.) One side and La Bohème: Si, mi chiamano Mimi. (Puccini.) One side. Both sung by Mafalda Favero (Soprano), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.
- WAGNER**
C-4114X { Tannhäuser: (a) Allorché tu; (b) O tu bell astro. Two sides. Both sung by Enrico Molinari (Baritone), with orchestra. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Opera lovers with that harassing combination—a slim purse and immoderate desires—should find the current Columbia foreign list abundantly interesting, for

(Continued on page 527)

Brunswick



RELEASES FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| 9 0 1 2 0 | WAGNER — THE FLYING DUTCHMAN — OVERTURE
THE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, BERLIN
RICHARD STRAUSS, Conductor | } Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 9 0 1 2 1 | SAINT-SAËNS — ROMANCE IN F MINOR for French Horn
French Horn Solo with Orch. Acc.—M. DEVEMY, French Horn Soloist | |
| | (a) MOUSSORGSKY—GOPAK From "Fair at Sorotchinsk" | } Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| | (b) RIMSKY-KORSAKOW — FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLE
BEE From "Czar Saltan" (Scherzo)
LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS
ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor | |
| 9 0 1 2 2 | RIMSKY-KORSAKOW—LE COQ D'OR (The Golden Cockerel)
Introduction and Bridal Cortège
LAMOUREUX ORCHESTRA, PARIS
ALBERT WOLFF, Conductor | } Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 9 0 1 2 3 }
9 0 1 2 4 } | BEETHOVEN—SONATA E FLAT MAJOR, . . . Op. 81a
Complete in four parts
Piano Solo, WILHELM KEMPF | |
| 9 0 1 2 5 | MOZART—MARRIAGE OF FIGARO — CRUDEL, PERCHE
FINORA FARMİ
FELICIE HÜNI-MIHACSEK and WILLI DOMGRAF-FASSBAENDER | } Recorded in Europe
PRICE \$1.50 |
| | MOZART—THE MAGIC FLUTE
O cara Armonia Vocal Trio in German
FELICIE HÜNI-MIHACSEK, WILLI DOMGRAF-FASSBAENDER
and GERHARD WITTING
STATE OPERA ORCHESTRA and CHORUS, BERLIN
J. PRÜWER, Conductor | |
| 1 5 2 1 9 | HOPE—WOODFORDE—FINDEN—THE TEMPLE BELLS
BARRIE—WOOD—A BROWN BIRD SINGING
Contralto with Orchestra KATHRYN MEISLE | } 10 inch
PRICE \$1.50 |
| 1 5 2 2 0 | HANDEL—LARGHETTO
BEETHOVEN—AUER—TURKISH MARCH
From "Ruins of Athens"
Violin Solo MISHEL PIASTRO Pianoforte by Jascha Veissi | |

Brunswick Records

BRUNSWICK RADIO CORPORATION
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in addition to the usual releases it contains the above wide selection of operatic discs. At 75c one doesn't expect—nor, for that matter, very often get—a great deal in a record, but these all give considerably more than their modest price would ordinarily indicate, and some of them, in fact, can be compared very favorably with the more expensive operatic recordings. The singers here may not be excessively pampered and widely advertised stars, but most of them are competent and manage to give thoroughly creditable, and, in several instances, exceptionally fine, accounts of themselves. And each disc has a good orchestral accompaniment, full, rich, round and properly balanced with the voice. They are evidently all repressings from Italian Columbia, and so are sung in the language of that country. There is no space to discuss them individually and in detail, but it is suggested, if you are fond of opera and operatic records, that you look them over carefully.



ARRIETA
V-30069
 to
V-30074

Marina: Zarzuela in Two Acts. Rendered by Margarita Cueto, José Moriche, Juan Pulido, Miguel Santacana, chorus and International Concert Orchestra, conducted by Eduardo Vigil y Robles.
 Six 10-inch discs in album. Victor Set S-5. \$5.

Columbia released the three-act version of *Marina* last Summer, and the set was reviewed on page 183 of the July issue. *Marina* was first written as a two-act zarzuela, and in that form it was produced at the Teatro Circo, Madrid, in 1855. Later the composer was persuaded to rewrite the zarzuela and change it into an opera of three acts. This was done, and it was given as an opera at the Teatro Real, Madrid, in 1871. This new set seems to be an abridged version of the zarzuela, containing the most effective and popular numbers. Of the two recordings, the more complete Columbia set, giving the work in operatic form, is the better: the recording is superior, and the work is presented in a more finished and polished manner. This new set is uneven, but for those who are not sufficiently interested in an extended recording like Columbia's, this little album of 10-inch discs can be recommended. The quartet, the *Seguidillas* and the last side of the set are the most effective numbers, and in them the interpretation and recording are thoroughly satisfactory. *Marina*, as a zarzuela, lacks the spontaneity and liveliness found in *El Dúo de la Africana* and *Bohemios*, reviewed last month. The album comes from the current Victor export list.

WAGNER
C-LX81
 to
C-LX98
 IMPORTED

Tannhäuser: Opera in Three Acts. Thirty-six sides. Rendered by Sigmund Pilinszky (Tenor), Ivar Andresen (Bass), Herbert Janssen (Baritone), George von Tschurtschenthaler (Baritone), Maria Müller (Soprano), Erna Berger (Soprano), Ruth Jost-Arden (Soprano), Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Karl Elmendorff.
 Eighteen 12-inch discs in two albums. \$36.

Reviewed in the article "The Bayreuth Festival 'Tannhäuser,'" printed elsewhere in this issue.

Magnificent New Victor Records

Among the latest releases which Victor offers are an operatic selection by a new artist, and a charming orchestral suite in modern idiom. Those not fortunate enough to attend the début of the new Metropolitan colorature, Mme. Lily Pons, in Lucia, may hear an exact reproduction of her art in her recording of the Mad Scene from that opera. Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra play Ravel's *Ma Mère L'Oye*, a suite of five pieces which Ravel originally wrote as piano duets for two little girls. Here is charming music which appeals strongly to the imagination. Other splendid recordings complete an interesting list.

Mignon—De son coeur j'ai calme la
fièvre (Thomas) and

Magic Flute — Possente numi (Mozart). Sung by Ezio Pinza with orchestral accompaniment, on Victor Record 6642. List Price, \$2.00.

Dance of the Marionette (Winternitz)
and

Polichinelle Serenade (Kreisler). Played by Fritz Kreisler with piano accompaniment, on Victor Record 1501. List Price, \$1.50.

Viennese Nights—You Will Remember Vienna and I Bring a Love Song, sung with orchestral accompaniment by Richard Crooks, assisted in the second selection by Edna Kellogg on Victor Record 1500. List Price, \$1.50.

Lucia di Lammermoor—Ardon gl' incensi and Spargi d'amaro pianto. Sung by Mme. Lily Pons, with orchestral accompaniment and flute obbligato on Victor Record 7369. List Price, \$2.00.

Ma Mère L'Oye (Ravel). Played by Koussevitzky and the Boston Orchestra on Victor Records 7370 and 7371. List Price, \$2.00 each.



Victor Division
R C A VICTOR COMPANY, Inc.
Camden, New Jersey

VOCAL



ROMBERG
V-1500

You Will Remember Vienna. One side and
I Bring a Love Song. One side. Both sung by Richard Crooks,
with orchestra.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

LISZT
KAUN
O-4978
IMPORTED

Es muss ein Wunderbares sein. (Liszt.) One side and
Der Sieger (Taufrisch glänzen die Blumen). (Kaun.) One side.
Both sung by Richard Tauber (Tenor), with orchestra.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.

FINDEN
WOOD
B-15219

The Temple Bells. (Hope-Woodforde-Finden.) One side and
A Brown Bird Singing. (Barrie-Wood.) One side. Both sung
by Kathryn Meisle (Contralto), with orchestra.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

Richard Crooks' two selections are from the new Hammerstein-Romberg moving picture, *Viennese Nights*. Of the two numbers, *You Will Remember Vienna* is much the superior; it is very appealing and successfully follows the style of the Viennese waltz. *I Bring a Love Song* is of the type that makes the movie fans glow and palpitate. . . . The Liszt song recently appeared in a recording by Emmy Bettendorf. Tauber's version is satisfactory. . . . Hugo Kaun was born in Berlin in 1863. The song given here reflects little credit upon his abilities as a composer. It is pompous, labored and seems to get nowhere. . . . As for the Kathryn Meisle numbers, they are homely and trite, but she sings them with commendable restraint.

BRAHMS
C-50270D

An eine Äolsharfe. One side and
Die Mainacht. One side. Both sung by Louis Graveure (Tenor)
with piano accompaniment by Walter Golde.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

This is a little disappointing. Graveure seems unable to convey Brahms with the poise, restraint and charm that distinguished Rehkemper's version of two other Brahms songs, reviewed last month. The recording, though, is excellent, and Walter Golde supplies a well considered accompaniment.

RIMSKY-
KORSAKOW
FARLEY-
FIELD
C-2359D

Sadko: A Song of India. (Rimsky-Korsakow.) One side and
The Night Wind. (Farley-Field.) One side. Both sung by
Anna Case (Soprano) with piano accompaniment by Carroll
Hollister. One 10-inch disc. 75c.

Anna Case's lovely voice is the principal feature here. The piano accompaniment is excellent, and so is the recording.

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CHORAL



BRAHMS

V-DB1442

and

V-DB1443

IMPORTED

Alto Rhapsody (from Goethe's *Harzreise im Winter*). Four sides. Rendered by Sigrid Onegin (Contralto), Berlin Doctors' Choir and Berlin State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Kurt Singer.

Two 12-inch discs. \$2.50 each.

Miniature Score—Philharmonia No. 152.

The *Alto Rhapsody* is one of Brahms' finest and most perfectly realized achievements, and it deals superbly with themes that appear constantly in his work: *i. e.*, the deathless themes of renunciation, human isolation, loneliness and the like. These are surely not new, nor is there any element of novelty visible in them. They are, in fact, present to a greater or lesser degree in a substantial portion of the world's music, for they express emotions common to everybody, and so constitute alluring—and hence extremely dangerous—material for the artist.

Yet they seldom have the profound meaning, significance and lofty dignity that they have in this *Alto Rhapsody*. It requires an intellect considerably above the average to deal at all intelligently and effectively with them. Loneliness and renunciation are not cheap emotions, not even in cheap people, but they quickly seem so when exploited by cheap artists. In the hands of the ordinary composer, indeed, they are reduced to a hopelessly mawkish and sloppy state, furnishing pleasurable tears for the majority and discreetly ribald merriment for the minority. For the ordinary composer's heart and head seldom strike a truce; they are commonly two entirely different things, with the former functioning far more easily and agreeably than the latter: so that the feelings of this otherwise estimable musician are generally an appallingly glorified version of those spread daily on the screens of the moving picture palaces of the world.

But Brahms, to return to the *Alto Rhapsody*, was not given to the resounding platitudes, attitudinizing and grandiose postures and gestures with which most of us seek to convince ourselves that we are of some importance, and so when he set out to tell us of the bitterness and anguish of isolation the result was a sovereign masterpiece whose direct, sincere eloquence is unfailingly appealing and arresting. The work, set to three stanzas of Goethe's *Harzreise im Winter*, was written in 1869 and published in 1870. Brahms himself was not unaware of the magnificence of this music, and it is said that he even kept it under his pillow at night.

The interpretation here is entirely adequate in the finest sense of the word. The balance between the soloist, chorus and orchestra is plausibly maintained throughout, and the recording has retained most of the loveliness of Sigrid Onegin's contralto. The orchestra and male chorus, capably directed by Dr. Kurt Singer, are excellent and provide an eminently satisfying background for the soloist. These are discs quite out of the ordinary. To some of us, indeed, they will be worth a dozen or so of the usual variety.

R. J. M.

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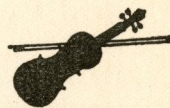
IMPORTED

Der Abend naht: Canzonetta for Soprano, Chorus and Orchestra.
Two sides. Rendered by Emmy Bettendorf (Soprano), Chorus
and Orchestra, conducted by O. Dobrindt. Violin solo: Joh.
Lasowski.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.25.



This turns out to be an arrangement for soprano, chorus and orchestra of the *Canzonetta* from Tschaikowsky's *Violin Concerto*, arranged by O. Dobrindt to the words by Alf. In its original form, the piece is far more effective, but the present arrangement is not an unpleasing one, and the vocal parts do not seem out of place. Emmy Bettendorf's lovely voice is, of course, the principal feature of the disc. A chorus and a solo violin now and then join in discreetly.

VIOLIN



**WINTERNITZ
KREISLER
V-1501**

Dance of the Marionette. (Felix Winternitz.) One side and
Polichinelle Serenade. (Kreisler.) One side. Both played by
Fritz Kreisler (Violin), with piano accompaniment.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

**BEETHOVEN
HANDEL
B-15220**

Ruins of Athens: Turkish March. (Beethoven-Auer). One
side and
Larghetto. (Handel.) One side. Both played by Mishel Piastro
(Violin), with piano accompaniment by Jascha Veissi.
One 10-inch disc. \$1.50.

**CHARLIER
C-50267D**

Chaconne. Two sides. Played by Yelly d'Aranyi (Violin), with
piano accompaniment by Arthur Bergh.
One 12-inch disc. \$1.25.

Kreisler's numbers are pleasantly negligible. Both are tuneful little pieces of the sort that violinists, for some reason or other, have decided the public wants. They are played with Kreisler's customary skill, and the recording is excellent. *Dance of the Marionette*, in which Carl Lamson provides the piano accompaniment, apparently was recorded in this country, while the *Polichinelle Serenade*, for which Michael Raucheisen supplies the accompaniment, was recorded in Europe. . . . Mishel Piastro, after a rather lengthy absence from the lists, rewards his followers with the *Turkish March* from Beethoven's *Ruins of Athens* and a Handel *Larghetto*. The former is brisk and energetic, the latter serene and smoothly flowing. Both are well played and recorded. . . . Of the composer of the *Chaconne* played by Yelly d'Aranyi, none of the standard musical dictionaries yields any information. The *Chaconne* is rather dull in spots, but the playing is musicianly and superbly achieved.



ORGAN

BACH

V-D1873

IMPORTED

Toccata in D Minor (Dorian Mode). One side and
Choral Prelude: In Thee Is Joy. One side. Both played by
Marcel Dupré (Organ).
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

WIDOR

V-D1898

IMPORTED

Variations from Fifth Symphony. Two sides. Played by Marcel
Dupré (Organ).
One 12-inch disc. \$2.

Dupré has at his disposal the organ of the Alexandra Palace, London, in these recordings. The reproduction is full and clear—not at all startling, but well up to the standard of present-day organ recording, which, it must be admitted, still must travel a considerable distance before attaining anything properly describable as perfection. . . . The Bach numbers are played with conviction and vigor, and the *Toccata*, in particular, is an impressive piece of work. . . . Widor's organ symphonies—suites, they say, is the better and more appropriate term for these works—have become widely popular in recent years, and several movements from them have been recorded. Dupré here essays the *Variations* from the *Fifth Symphony*. They are said to be exceedingly difficult to play, but Dupré conquers their difficulties with ease. The tone and recording are very mellow and rich.

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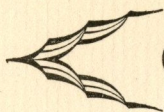
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CORRESPONDENCE



More "Jazzo-Analysis"

Editor, *Disques*:

Assuredly, I am not going to quarrel with Mr. Mitchell about his opinions, whether of me, or of Messrs. Copland and Gershwin. It is not only a woman who, "convinced against her will, is of the same opinion still." Since it is only twenty-five years since I was graduated from high school I may hardly be expected to possess the self-assurance of your correspondent, who "got out of high school a couple of years ago." However, fortunately we not only learn, but we unlearn.

He suggests that someone should find out from me whether I know anyone else writing serious jazz, outside of my two friends. That word "serious" bogs me; I recognize two kinds of music, good and bad. Solemnity does not trick me; levity is æsthetically valid, if it be good. If Mr. Mitchell will pollute his hands long enough to open my recent book, "Tin Pan Alley," he will discover that serious jazz is being experimented with all over the European world. (And, by the way, if he will study up the subject of Jazz technically, he may be surprised to discover that jazz is something more than raw material.)

When I read of my three words, the "Great American Composer," as an unacknowledged quotation from Van Vechten, I gave a most jazzy laugh. I did not know that Carl had copyrighted the dictionary. When I really quote a man—including Carl—I am especially careful to credit him, as Mr. Mitchell may discover, again, in the rash volume of mine to which I have already referred.

His discussion of the Jews in modern music I pass over; I recall a certain essay by Richard Wagner. Has Mr. Mitchell been quoting without acknowledgment? I am interested in art, not racial competition; I simply sought to show a reason why the Jews, together with the Negroes, might have been expected to achieve status as jazz composers. It is news to me that the *Concerto in F* is not good jazz but that it may be, none the less, good music. I am gratified.

As for conductor-admirers of Gershwin, Mr. Mitchell will have to include also such "rather naïve" gentlemen as Serge Koussevitzky, Alfredo Casella, Artur Bodanzky and

maybe Stokowski. Carlos, I go to hell in good company!

It is generous of your correspondent to include me among the "clever literary men"; long before I had left high school, however, I had written reams of music, most of which I was sensible enough not to publish. Music came first with me, not literature. If Gershwin and Copland have fooled me, they have fooled, not a clever literary man, but a musician. It is not impossible; I feel that it is unlikely.

I know Lambert's *Rio Grande* very well; I doubt that it would have been written had Gershwin never lived. It is excellent music, with fine vocal effects. It has breeding. If Lambert is good, can Gershwin therefore—being different, and more vital—not be good also?

Stravinsky? A genius of the first water. But when he tried to imitate our ragtime, he made a fizzle of it. However, in his latest *Capriccio* (for piano and orchestra) he has some radiant jazz.

You see, I have this advantage over Mr. Mitchell: I can like both Stravinsky and Gershwin, both Ravel and Copland. (Would it surprise Mr. Mitchell to learn that Copland is an authority on Stravinsky?) However, I have said my say in "Jazzo-Analysis," and see no need of retraction. Doubtless Mr. Mitchell will grow older and I, wiser.

ISAAC GOLDBERG

Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Louis Armstrong Abroad

Editor, *Disques*:

We have read with considerable interest the letter from Mr. Mitchell in your November issue, and we think that your readers may be interested to know that Louis Armstrong is now almost a "household word" in this country, and indeed all over Europe. His records which we issue here are included in a series of "ultra-modern" records under the title "Rhythm Style Series." This series features "hot" records by star American players, and Louis Armstrong is a prime favorite. These records, particularly those of Louis Armstrong, have undoubtedly stimulated tremendously the interest in "hot jazz" (or "ultra-modern dance music") on this side of the Atlantic. We cannot close without telling you with what interest we read *Disques* each month.

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BOOKS

Music Come to Earth. By Adolf Weissmann. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. \$1.90.

This is one of the most important volumes that have been reviewed in these columns. Current musical literature is concerned so largely with biographical matter and the trivial theories of trivial men, whose vision has difficulty in reaching back to yesterday and crumbles up absurdly when it seeks to peer through the mists into tomorrow, that it is indescribably stimulating to come upon a book by so balanced, sane and penetrating a critic as the late Adolf Weissmann.

"For Weissmann," as Eric Blom, "the translator of the book, points out, 'had a very real grasp of the musical situation of his time, and he was one of the few German critics who admit that the art of music is not their own country's exclusive concern, as indeed it never was, though it may have threatened to become so in the course of the nineteenth century. Already this book is a valuable historical document; in a hundred years and more musicians will look upon it as one of the most interesting sources of information on what they perhaps regard as a period of significant upheaval, perhaps—who knows?—only as an age of freakish and barren endeavor.'"

The startling changes the world has undergone in the past twenty or thirty years and the sometimes disastrous effects of these changes upon the art of music form the theme of Weissmann's book. Sport, jazz, machinery, psycho-analysis, the "almighty conductor," democracy, mechanical music—these are some of the things that Weissmann covers. We hear of these things a good deal these days, and so the prospect of reading about them again is not exactly alluring. But after Weissmann's cool, logical and profound discussion of them the outpourings of most other men seem by comparison vapid and childish.

There are, of course, as there are bound to be, inaccuracies in the volume, and much of it may seem painfully obvious and no longer news. But that is inevitable in a book of this kind, which, to quote Mr. Blom again, "is a snapshot of a passing situation, not a film recording a development. A fleeting impression had to be arrested at one particular point of an extremely complex evolutionary process; the truth of things had to

be caught and fixed at a moment when any apparent fact might prove a delusion; subsequent sketching in of details had to be restricted as much as possible if the momentary glimpse was to retain its actuality. Thus some of the author's assertions may now appear somewhat exaggerated, and while more than one of his prophecies looks like coming true, there is no doubt that once again his judgment needs reconsidering; that he had here and there let a hasty impression dictate too blunt a statement . . . in the subject of this book as well as in its treatment there is a constant reminder of the transitoriness of all things—itsself included."

As for Weissmann's final conclusions, they can very well be summed up in a sentence that appears in his foreword. "Music's coming down to earth need not be its ruin; but its conformance with this new world of machinery cannot but change its very core." A platitude, perhaps, but one that has all the ear-marks of truth. It is pleasant to find the author carefully avoiding that man-under-the-bed of the old women of current criticism, the word "standardization." The book is highly recommended. An index would have been helpful.

Encyclopedia of the World's Best Recorded Music. Second Edition. Completely revised and compiled by Richard Gilbert. New York: The Gramophone Shop, Inc. 25c.

The new edition of the *Encyclopedia*, because of its immediate interest to all record collectors and because its importance demanded more space than could be found in this department, is reviewed in the editorial columns of this issue.

The Rose Cavalier. By Eric Blom. London: Oxford University Press. 50c.

When and if a complete recording of Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* finally does appear, this immensely entertaining and instructive little volume by Eric Blom should be consulted by those who obtain the set. Issued in the *Musical Pilgrim* series, edited by Sir Arthur Somervell, the book gives a clear, thorough-going analysis of the music drama, an excellent outline of its plot, and some admirable comments by Mr. Blom.

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